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## Early elections bill passes 1st reading



Barak (left) listens to Prime Minister Netanyahu's plea for a unity government in the Knesset yesterday, before rejecting it.

### 81 MKs supported, 30 opposed; Vote expected in Spring

By NINA GILBERT

#### Elections '99

The nation is almost certainly heading to the polls in the next few months, after the coalition gave its support yesterday for the first reading of an opposition bill on early elections.

The 81-30 vote, with four abstentions and five MKs absenting themselves, came after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made a last-minute call on Labor Party leader Ehud Barak to take a 72-hour break for talks on forming a national unity government.

Netanyahu told the House that he had been "inspired" by Shas leader Aryeh Deri's call for national unity, only an hour after accepting that he was headed for elections.

However, Barak said, though he cherishes the idea of national unity, "it is perhaps a little too late" for such an offer, because "the government's days have ended. I say with pain that in the situation created, the correct path is early elections."

When the vote took place, it was supported by almost the entire cabinet: Netanyahu, Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon, Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani, Communications Minister Limor Livnat, Tourism Minister Moshe Katsav, and Agriculture Minister Rafael Eitan.

Other support came from Likud MKs Ze'ev (Benny) Begin and Dan Meridor, Geshet MK David Levy, Land of Israel leader Michael Kleiner, The Third Way, Yisrael Ba'aliya's Tzvi Weinberg, and the Tsomet MKs.

The main opposition came from Shas, United Torah Judaism, and Yisrael Ba'aliya, including its leader Industry and Trade Minister Shimon Peres, while Justice Minister Tzvi Hanegbi also voted against.

None of the National Religious Party MKs supported the bill. Livnat and Likud MK Uzi Landau reportedly plan to announce today that they will challenge Netanyahu for the Likud leadership.

The bill will now be sent to the Knesset Law Committee to be prepared for its second and third readings, which are expected to be completed within two weeks.

After days of suspense leading up to "Super Monday," in which the government could also have fallen by a no-confidence motion, what remains is to pick a Tuesday for early elections. Coalition and opposition leaders are expected to launch negotiations over an election date (see story Page 2).

Labor faction leader Elie Goldschmidt said the party's preference is to hold elections as soon as possible, with the preferred date March 9. However, he noted that the Central Elections Committee may not be able to prepare in time, and thus the second choice is April 27. The Likud has not yet stated its preference, but in any case a date before the May 4 expiration of the Oslo accords is almost certain.

Elections would be held for the 15th Knesset and prime minister,

with the next elections scheduled for November 2003.

Yesterday's session began after a day-long dispute on whether Netanyahu would be able to put his peace-process platform to a vote. As a compromise, it was decided that Barak would give a response. In addition, Meretz withdrew its no-confidence motion.

After the speeches, all the factions' political proposals were put to a vote, with only those of United Torah Judaism and Shas passing.

Both leaders emphasized the early elections reality in their speeches, launching into full-fledged campaign mode, including policy platforms and personal attacks. Netanyahu declared that the Palestinians would not get "another speck of territory until they retract their intention to declare a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital. The Palestinians are blatantly disregarding the negotiations on the final-status arrangements," he said.

At the same time, he stressed the achievement of the PNC's cancellation of its charter clauses hostile to Israel as an example of his standing firm.

Netanyahu also reiterated the rest of the government's conditions for renewal of the peace process, including the demand that the Palestinian Authority cooperate on combating terrorism, end incitement, accept that jailed murderers will not be released, and impound illegal weapons.

He then launched into an attack on Barak, calling on him to take a consistent policy, noting that he had given a security net and then ripped it up. He also said Barak had brought three American campaign advisers to speak for him, since "the obvious has nothing to say himself."

See ELECTIONS, Page 2

## US and Egyptian officials: Keep the process alive

Realists, be they Palestinians, Americans or Israelis, all know that the implementation of the Wye accord is about to be put in the back seat as the government drives off towards elections.

And while the peace process will continue, the government says they are not doing.

The American position, in turn, is that, officially, there is a time line, and there is an expectation that the sides keep as close as possible to that schedule.

Unofficially, however, US sources signal resignation to the new circumstances, admit that they do not expect the process to move forward at this time and add that it would "not make sense" for US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to travel to the region to oversee implementation before the elections take place.

"Our preference would be to have no freeze, but we have to be realistic. It is difficult, in the heat of an election campaign, to try and deal with such other issues - especially when there is so much baggage attached," a senior US official said.

"Of course we are worried, and would like the government to somehow keep the process alive. We certainly don't want to see the Palestinians go back into an intifada, and we don't want to see a

whole mass of settlement expansion." The official added, however, that it was clear that Netanyahu would not "rip up" the whole process, and therefore the US was confident that the upcoming hiatus could be weathered.

"Netanyahu has indicated both behind closed doors and out in the open that he is committed to this process; this has been his consistent message... He has got to face the realities of politics and it is clear he does not want to lose the support of his right wing... but he will not let the whole process collapse."

The official said that looking at matters "with long-term vision," the situation did not look abysmal. "Do you know how long it takes to get anything done around here? Some of the things that came out of Wye took nine months to negotiate. The process is too important for impatience to take over. No one can magically change what is on the ground. So our main problem now, with a lack of visual improvement on the ground, and this new setback, is to maintain the commitment of both sides to the process."

Egyptian Ambassador Mohamed Bassiouny echoed the call for continued commitment and called on the US to help "fill the vacuum" of the upcoming hiatus.

"If the Israelis are not able to implement now that there are elections, at least the US should help find a way to fill the space until the elections," Bassiouny said. "Leaving a political vacuum will cause a lot of problems... so the Americans have to find the way to keep the process alive."

### ANALYSIS

By DANNA HARMAN

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Bassiouny said he felt Netanyahu would be amenable to moving forward with some side aspects of the agreement at this point - such as giving attention to raising the Palestinian standard of living and resolving the water issues - if only for political reasons.

"Netanyahu will want to show the center that the peace process is going on and not dying," Bassiouny said. "This was Netanyahu's promise: Security Communities in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza, and Habad - to name but a few. Now they are either completely gone, disappointed with Netanyahu's performance and no longer willing to help him get an encore, or - as in the case of the settlers' council - they will support him, but not with nearly the enthusiasm they did in 1996."

The loss of Habad may very well be one of the most damaging to the prime minister. In a final campaign push that has since entered Israeli political lore, Habad was responsible for the "Bibi is good for the Jews" cam-

## Netanyahu gets no comfort from the Lubavitchers

By HERB KEINON

When Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu looks out and surveys the landscape to see whom he can count on for campaign help this time around, the vista will look mighty barren.

In 1996 he looked out and saw Dan Meridor, Ze'ev (Benny) Begin, Yitzhak Mordechai, Uzi Landau, Limor Livnat, David Levy, Rafael Eitan, the Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza, and Habad - to name but a few. Now they are either completely gone, disappointed with Netanyahu's performance and no longer willing to help him get an encore, or - as in the case of the settlers' council - they will support him, but not with nearly the enthusiasm they did in 1996.

The loss of Habad may very well be one of the most damaging to the prime minister. In a final campaign push that has since entered Israeli political lore, Habad was responsible for the "Bibi is good for the Jews" cam-

paigned a few days before the 1996 balloting, a campaign that was as successful as it was controversial, and which some pundits say put Netanyahu over the top.

The verdict on whether Netanyahu is good or bad for the Jews may still be out, Rabbi Mordechai Ashkenazi of Kfar Habad said at a recent meeting of Habad rabbis against the Wye accords. "But one thing is certain, he has been bad for Habad."

Habad activists say this is first because he did not keep his promises on not withdrawing from any part of the Land of Israel; secondly, because the movement's image was damaged by coming out so unequivocally for one candidate; and thirdly, because their support caused internal problems that have plagued the movement since leader Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson died in 1994.

"We will not get involved," Habad spokesman Menachem Brod said, when asked whether the movement would support Netanyahu again this time. He likened Habad's move into

the political foray in 1996 to sticking one's foot into mud. "If I put my foot into the mud, that doesn't mean I also have to put my head in the mud as well. And now I am even trying to take the foot out and wash it."

On the eve of the last elections, Ariel Sharon arranged a meeting between Netanyahu and the Habad leadership and mounted an emotional appeal, claiming Habad could decide the outcome for Netanyahu. The Council of Habad Rabbis decided to support Netanyahu, in exchange for a letter from him that read in part, "A government that we head will stand firm against the establishment of a Palestinian state, and will not transfer any more territories in the Land of Israel to foreign sovereignty."

By signing the Wye accords, and by going ahead with the first redeployment under those accords, Netanyahu has reneged on that promise, Brod said. As such, there is no longer any reason to support him.

See LUBAVITCH, Page 2

## PA picks site for first history museum

By BEN LYNFIELD

In its first foray into exhibiting the past, the Palestinian Authority is moving ahead with plans to open a history museum in the West Bank village of Ein Sinya, north of Ramallah.

"This museum will be about Palestinian life rather than the nakba only," said Sam'an Khoury, an adviser to PA Minister of Information and Culture Yasser Abed Rabbo. Its name has not been chosen, but will include the word "remembrance," he said.

The Arabic word nakba means catastrophe and refers to the displacement experienced by Palestinians during Israel's establishment and victory in the War of Independence. This displacement, in which about 600,000 Palestinians were expelled or fled, and the role of Israelis in this, will be depicted in the exhibits, Khoury said.

"Part of the nakba was expulsions," he explained. "The more you regress this, the more it will pop up again in the minds of Palestinians. When you talk about it more freely, then you can move on." Other displays, to be devised with the assistance of the French government, will show Palestinian society before the nakba and the continuity of Palestinian life afterwards.

The museum, due to open in spring 2000, also will include a

memorial flame for those who died during the nakba. Khoury envisions visits to the site by foreign heads of state, but believes most of those who will frequent it will be students and researchers.

The museum will be housed in the former residence of Abdel-Kader Hussein, the Palestinian commander who was killed by Hagana troops at the Kastel, in the Jerusalem Corridor, on April 7, 1948, and became the leading martyr of the war in Palestinian eyes, a symbol of defiance against the Jewish forces.

The stressing of that theme in contemporary political terms seems likely to bolster the standing of Faisal Hussein, the son of Abdel-Kader, who holds the Jerusalem portfolio in the PA cabinet and is in many respects the leading nationalist figure in the West Bank. Hussein recalled yes-

terday that his father's main headquarters was in nearby Bir Zeit, but that he held operational meetings in the house and also used it to store weapons. During the 1936-39 Arab revolt against the British, Abdel-Kader Hussein used the site as "a secret headquarters," Faisal Hussein said.

"My feeling is like that of any other Palestinian. I am proud of our history and I am especially proud because he's my father," Hussein said.

A corner of the museum will be dedicated to the life of Abdel-Kader Hussein. In Ein Sinya, the power the Hussein family wielded back in the 1940's - symbolized by the block-long stone structure - lives on in the collective memory of the residents.

See MUSEUM, Page 2

## NY gay synagogue gets \$168,000 UJA grant for continuity

By MARILYN HENRY

NEW YORK - New York's gay and lesbian synagogue, Congregation Beth Simchat Torah, is becoming so well established within the Jewish community that it has received \$168,000 from UJA-Federation of New York for its Jewish continuity programs.

The synagogue, which is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, received a four-year grant for a broad spectrum of educational programs for children and adult members of the congregation, said Alisa Ruben Kurshan, executive director of the federation's Jewish Continuity Commission.

She declined to indicate if there were any challenges to using communal funds to benefit the syna-

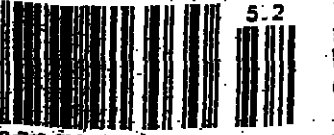
agogue, saying instead that all proposals are judged on the basis of the programming planned.

"This clearly was a quality proposal," Ruben Kurshan said.

"I am in favor of educating all Jews," said Rabbi Steven Dworken, the executive director of the Rabbinical Council of America, the mainstream Orthodox rabbinic wing.

Because he believes that Orthodoxy is the correct expression of Jewish life, Dworken would prefer that the funds go to Orthodox institutions. However, he said, "Since the federation has decided to grant funding to all segments of the community, this is also a segment of the community."

Beth Simchat Torah has 800 members.





## Haggling begins over election date

By LIAT COLLINS

As the move toward early elections gained strength yesterday, the Knesset began playing the dating game: setting a target for new elections. Suggestions range from March to mid-May.

Coalition and Likud chairman Meir Sheerit said there is not yet agreement "neither within the coalition nor within the opposition." He said he had asked Knesset Law Committee chairman Hanan Porat (National Religious Party) to convene the committee on Monday to begin discussions on an election date and reading the bill approved yesterday for its final readings.

Technically, Porat could hold up the bill for six months, but this is considered unlikely, particularly after Porat himself noted the large majority for its first reading. It could be readied for second and third readings within a few days.

The choice of a date pivots around May 4, when Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat has said he will declare a state. The mid-March dates favored by Sheerit and Meretz leader Yossi Sarid would allow for a new government to be safely installed before

then, even if it is necessary to hold a runoff election two weeks later.

Although the plenum call by Shas leader Aryeh Deri for a national unity government was immediately picked up by the prime minister, Labor leader Ehud Barak turned it down and it now has a lower chance of taking off. Deri said he had not coordinated his call with Netanyahu.

Deri said the period between first and second reading "leaves a window open." Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he felt at one with himself with the decision to offer another chance at national unity. Asked why he had waited so long, he said he had held "discreet talks with Ehud Barak several months ago, but they were stopped by him" after they were made public.

He said there had since been "many feelers and many informal contacts which did not amount to anything. [Yesterday evening] I decided to at least know that my conscience was clear, to extend my hand to national unity, to try to unite the people before the enormous challenges that face us in achieving a secure peace and if that offer is rejected we'll go to the people. I'm sure we will receive a renewed mandate from the people to

lead this country to peace."

Asked whether there was still a chance for national unity government, Netanyahu said the reporters should direct that question to Barak.

Sheerit said the chance for a national unity government is "very, very small. I don't think there is a real chance of stopping the elections from going ahead now."

Meretz leader Yossi Sarid ridiculed Netanyahu's acceptance of the possibility of a national unity government. "When the rope is around his neck, Netanyahu sings about a national unity government and he is prepared to even dance the unity debka."

Former Labor Party leader Shimon Peres said he still favors a national unity government.

But Labor MK Haim Ramon called the national unity offer "pathetic." He said Netanyahu should have declared this after Wye and not when he felt he was losing. He said he has a possible date for elections is around April 27.

Asked whether this would not be too close to May 4, Ramon replied, "I have no doubt that everybody will wait for the election results in Israel and nobody will do anything."

Land of Israel Front leader MK Michael Kleiner said he felt there had been no option but to go to early elections. He called Netanyahu "hypocritical" for early in the afternoon presenting a tough political stand on the diplomatic process and a few hours later offering a national unity government, which would lead to further concessions. Kleiner said he sees himself as part of a new right-wing party including former Likud leader Yitzhak Shamir and Likud MK Ze'ev (Benny) Begin based on the old Herut principles.

There is still an outside chance that the prime minister would go to the president and ask his permission to resign, in which case there would be elections just for premier 60 days later.

The advantage of this is that it would prevent Amnon Lipkin-Shahak from running against him; and more importantly, if he is returned to power, Netanyahu would still be eligible to serve two more full terms under the Basic Law: The Government. On the other hand, Netanyahu knows he would remain with the same Knesset and same coalition which brought him into this situation in the first place.

## PA fears freeze in peace process

By BEN LYNNFIELD

The debate and vote to pass the Knesset bill for early elections was closely watched last night by the leaders of the Palestinian Authority, who are deeply concerned it will lead to a protracted freeze in the peace process.

"We will be losing at least eight months from this," said PA Justice Minister Freih Abu Meidan in an interview. "This is Israel's democracy for its own people, while the Palestinians will pay the price."

Abu Meidan, who had Hebrew-speaking friends translate as he watched the debate on television, voiced concern about a possible escalation in street violence while Israel works out who will form its next government.

"The Palestinians should be patient, but our people are losing hope, and the prisoners are losing hope," he said. "I believe that the Arab world and the Palestinian side will be very frustrated, and that Arafat will be put in a corner waiting for such a long time."

Abu Meidan said the PA is determined to ensure that this election campaign will not be disrupted by Hamas suicide bombers as was the case during 1996.

"If they do anything it will be dangerous and I advise them not to do this."

Politically, they have a free hand, but there will be no violence against civilians. This is a strategy based on the fact that we are looking for relations with the Israeli people.

"It would be stupidity to give extremists another chance for

power in Israel," he added. "Let the Israeli people make their choice. Give them a chance in a relaxed situation to go and elect their government in a good mood while at the same time we ask our people to be patient."

Abu Meidan flatly rejected the conditions Netanyahu stressed during his speech, as requirements for Israeli implementation of the Wye agreement. "This was a speech for elections not for peace," he said.

The conditions include Palestinian renunciation of intentions to unilaterally declare an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital; recognition that Israel never promised to release prisoners jailed for killing; and cessation of incitement.

The PA Justice Minister said he is not optimistic that Labor Party leader Ehud Barak would mark much of an improvement over Netanyahu.

"Both of them put conditions regarding all of Jerusalem for Israel's capital, they both support settlements, and they both say no to an independent Palestinian state. There is no difference between the white cat and the black cat."

Abu Meidan termed Amnon Lipkin-Shahak "a nice man who is honest and sincere about peace." But, he added, "I don't think he has a chance."

Ghazi Hamed, the editor of a Hamas affiliated newspaper, said the Knesset vote puts the PA in an increasingly difficult position.

"People will now get more frustrated and criticize the authority more and more," Hamed said.

## Bill to end direct election of PM moves forward

By NINA GILBERT

The early elections drama in the Knesset last night was preceded by the House passing the first reading of a bill to cancel the system for direct prime ministerial elections.

The bipartisan legislation, passed by a vote of 62-57 and one abstention, is sponsored by MK Yossi Beilin (Labor) and MK Uzi Landau (Likud).

The vote was a final slap in the face of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu by several of his ministers, including Communications Minister Limor Livnat, Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, and Tourism Minister Moshe Katsov.

Labor Party leader Ehud Barak voted against the change, as did Labor MKs Haim Ramon and Shevah Weiss. Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon and Meretz leader Yossi Sarid.

Most parties were split in their support of the measure, although Yisrael Ba'aliya and all religious MKs except NRP MK Yigal Bibi voted against. The Democratic Arab Party voted against, while Hadash supported the bill.

Beilin announced before the vote that the law would only take effect in the 16th Knesset, and not in the upcoming elections. "Otherwise, there is simply no majority," he admitted.

The bill calls for a return to the one-vote parliamentary system in

place until the 1996 elections. The change was approved on the eve of the 1992 elections, also after it was agreed it would not take effect until the following government.

"An absolute majority of the MKs who voted in favor in canceling the direct elections system for the 16th Knesset gave a victory to Israel's parliament and democracy," Beilin said after the vote.

"They understand today that it is not possible to continue with a political accident," he added.

He called on the law committee to finish preparing the legislation in as short a time as possible during the term of the present Knesset so it will be able to be passed before the upcoming elections.

Beilin told the House that after a two-and-a-half-year experiment, it was apparent that the political blackmail still exists.

"The only difference is that now instead of occurring before establishing a coalition, it happens before every vote," he said.

Also yesterday, the government withdrew the economic arrangements bill, after Meretz turned into a no-confidence motion the vote on a government bill that would block Reform and Conservative rabbis from religious councils. United Torah Judaism had made its support of the economic arrangements bill contingent on passage of the religious councils bill.



IDF snowmen  
IDF soldiers train in the season's first snow yesterday on Mt. Hermon.

## MUSEUM

Continued from Page 1

"All the people loved the family, people worked for them, they could put people in jail," said Yussef Ali Nassar, who grew up in Ein Sinya and has relatives there. "That was the golden age of the Hussein family. It was the strongest family in the Ramallah area."

Faisal Hussein has a house in the village, across the highway from the site of the planned museum.

"We welcome having a museum," Nassar said. "If tourists come, then maybe they will build restaurants and the village will profit."

The museum has a long way to go. In terms of exhibits, a committee of planners is just at the "brainstorming" stage, Khoury said. French specialists just completed a report on how to administer the site.

The PA Finance Ministry recently allocated funds to rent the Ein Sinya building for a year from cousins of Faisal Hussein. But the committee planning the museum has as yet been unable to raise money to make necessary renovations, said Khoury.

"We have received pledges, but have not actually seen the money," Khoury said.

As for housing the museum in the residence of a man who was the arch-enemy of Israelis, Khoury said: "People should learn to tolerate each other. If Israelis choose to say Ben-Gurion or Begin is a hero, we are starting to say fine. In our minds, [Hussein] is a hero."

Shlomo Dror, spokesman for the Coordinator of Activities in the Territories, said Israel's response to the museum will depend on its message.

"If it helps them take pride in remembering their history that's fine," he said. "But if it produces hatred and bitterness towards Israel, then we have a problem."

## LUBAVITCH

Continued from Page 1

"We became involved in 1996, not because we felt that Habad should get involved in politics - Habad should not get involved in politics - but because we were told that we could be the deciding factor in whether Netanyahu gets elected, or whether [Shimon] Peres would win," Brodsky said. "We thought that by backing Netanyahu we would be saving the Land of Israel, so we supported him. But now that we see he has followed Peres's path, our support has ended."

Yosef Aronov, head of the Habad Youth Organization, and one of Habad's leaders in Israel, said the movement would not wage that type of pro-Netanyahu campaign again. "If you ask me now whether we will do this again, I would say 100 percent no," said Aronov. "This was a one-time decision."

Habad, however, has over the

last decade taken a number of "one-time" political decisions that have had a tremendous impact on the political scene. The first was in 1988, when the rebbe backed Agudat Yisrael, and was credited with boosting that party's fortunes from two to five seats. Habad has not backed them since.

In 1990, it was two Agudat Yisrael MKs loyal to the rebbe who torpedoed Peres's attempt to form a Labor government - during what has come to be known as the "stinking maneuver." And in 1996, it was the "Good for the Jews" campaign that helped Netanyahu come to power.

While neither Brodsky nor Aronov, both instrumental in the 1996 campaign, would admit that their support for Netanyahu was an error, Kfar Habad's Ashkenazi does not share their reticence.

Earlier in the month he attracted national attention, and the approbation of the Habad spokesmen, when he called Netanyahu a "fraud and a rogue" at an anti-Wye gathering.

This language is not Habad's style, the official representatives of the movement said, when chastising Ashkenazi for his comments. But Ashkenazi said in his own defense, "When a thief comes into my house and steals the contents of the house, is it not Habad's style to go to the police? That man [Netanyahu] has done us irreparable damage. Why should I be unable to say he has done this damage?"

Ashkenazi said that in 1996 "it was a mistake" for Habad to come out in favor of Netanyahu. "I don't blame them," he said of the Habad leadership's decision at the time. "[Habad] followed someone who simply pulled the wool over their eyes. But my message is that Habad should not get into politics, and get out as soon as it can. Our role is to spread hassidism around the world. Getting into politics hurts us."

Yosef Gerlitzyk, a Habad rabbi in Tel Aviv and the head of a rabbinical organization called Pikuach Nefesh, which lobbies

against giving up any part of the Land of Israel, said the decision to back Netanyahu in 1996 was not agreed upon by everyone in Habad, which has been hurt by its support for Netanyahu.

Earlier this month, Gerlitzyk was one of six Habad rabbis, including Ashkenazi, who took out a front page advertisement in Ha'aretz distancing themselves from Joseph Gutnik, the Australian millionaire and Habad patron, who arrived in Israel for meetings with Netanyahu.

The advertisement, which stated that Gutnik does not represent Habad, said "Gutnik and company, who were involved in entangling Habad in politics over the last few years while taking advantage of Habad's commitment to the integrity of the Land, continues to weave political ties in order to strengthen the existing leadership - which cut out and transferred the heart of the Holy Land to the haters of Israel."

These dueling tirades brought into the open another problem that

support for Netanyahu has brought to the forefront: the bickering inside the movement and multiple voices speaking in the name of Habad.

Yitzhak Alfasi, a researcher on hassidic movements, who has written some 50 books on the subject, said that internal frictions are natural at a time when there is no single leader. "The factionalization," he says, "is wider than we think."

Up to now the movement was divided into those who believe the rebbe is the messiah, and those who don't. The debate over support for Netanyahu has added a new faction.

"What we are seeing is not a power struggle for the leadership, but rather a struggle over the movement's path," said Alfasi. "They have nearly 2,000 emissaries all over the world, all receiving salaries. This is far from the start of a collapse of the movement. But what it says is that there are now a number of different factions all speaking in the name of the rebbe."

## ELECTIONS

Continued from Page 1

He concluded by announcing his support for early elections, calling on the House to support his plan, and said that if there

was no support there was no choice but "to replace the Knesset."

Barak responded that the opposition had saved the coalition from collapsing only to enable the continuation of the peace process. "We thought we would

continue to support a limping government. But then we saw that it was all talk and surrender to extremists."

Barak also laid down his political policy lines, saying that Jerusalem would remain the "undivided capital of Israel - period."

He also said that under no circumstances would Israel return to the pre-1967 borders, no foreign army would be allowed west of the Jordan River, and that the major blocks of settlements would come under Israeli sovereignty.

He agreed with Netanyahu by condemning a unilateral declaration by the Palestinians of a state and upholding the principle that agreements must be kept, and that jailed murderers would stay behind bars.

However, he said, "the trust [with the Palestinians] must be renewed," he said.

During Netanyahu's speech, an impatient Knesset Speaker Dan Tichon called a 10-minute recess due to heckling from MKs.

When the House reconvened, President Ezer Weizman arrived.

However, Netanyahu was still outside in consultations, and when he arrived, Weizman left in protest.

After the vote, the Knesset passed a bill proposed by Sheerit under which the president would serve for one seven-year term.

Early elections seemed inevitable in the afternoon, after the Likud faction decided in a closed meeting before the session to join the opposition bill for early elections, and United Torah Judaism withdrew its motion of no confidence in the prime minister.

**New Synagogue of Netanya**  
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## Settlers regroup after vote

By MARGOT DUDKEVITCH

The outcome of yesterday's vote was predictable, said settler leaders last night, adding they warned Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu at Wye Plantation that if he signed the agreement he would lose his coalition. Settlers plan to convene soon to plan strategy for uniting the center-right national camp parties.

Throughout the day settler leaders continued intensive, last-minute attempts to persuade the members of the Land of Israel Front and National Religious Party not to topple the government, knowing their chances were slim.

Council chairman Pinhas Wallerstein declared that toppling the government would only bring about a Palestinian state. Council director Aharon Domb stressed the council would not be involved in establishing political parties, but would continue to strengthen and unify the supporters of settlement in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza.

Even before the vote to advance elections, Labor Party chairman Ehud Barak was threatened with a NIS 500,000 libel suit if he did not immediately apologize to former Kach leader Baruch Marzel for "slanderous statements" in his speech.

Marzel was outraged at Barak's claims "linking him with Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and claiming he had received money from Netanyahu," and suggesting he had been working for six months to topple the government.

## Waiting for the PM's 'back me or sack me' speech

By LIAT COLLINS

Hours before what the BBC called, "Bibi's back me or sack me" speech, the Knesset took on the peculiar atmosphere that results from the presence of scores of adrenalin-filled politicians and press pounding the corridors waiting for a story to happen. For the first time in a very long period, all 120 MKs were in the building.

The start of the speech by Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, however, was delayed by almost 90 minutes due to last-minute changes in the schedule and a disagreement between the opposition and coalition over whether and when it could be made and voted on.

The House Committee reconvened to finalize the schedule just 15 minutes before the plenum session was due to begin at 4 p.m.

As a move to save time in the plenum, Meretz agreed to drop its separate no-confidence motion.

During the delay, President Ezer Weizman sat with Speaker Dan Tichon in the Speaker's office. Several of the Arab MKs used the time to break the Ramadan fast. Meanwhile, representatives of the foreign media continued to try to make sense of the whole story.

Scores of television crews swarmed around the House, crowding corridors and taking up places in the canteen. Their massive presence led Labor whip Elie Golschmidt to quip, "Even CNN has pulled out of Baghdad and come to Jerusalem."

Media-oriented MKs with good English found themselves much in demand. MK Ruby Rivlin (Likud)

gave interviews to Swiss, Danish, and US television crews, one after the other.

Among the television stations covering the event was the Qatari Al Jazeera satellite channel, which broadcasts to the Arab world. Senior correspondent Walid Omari said, "An event like this is of interest to the entire Arab world. There is no way we could not cover it."

Party supporters and functionaries from across the spectrum also turned up. Among the most imaginative were young opposition supporters who distributed copies of their own idea for an election slogan with a direct quote from the prime minister to his wife after a heavy media attack a few months ago: "Come on Saraleh, we're going home."

Naomi Simons adds:

At Jerusalem's busy Central Bus Station yesterday, the prospect of early elections was the topic of the moment.

"Are they done with Saddam yet?" asks a man behind the counter of a cafe in Jerusalem.

"No," his customer answers, "but they have finished off Bibi."

"I'm glad there will be an election soon," said one Jerusalem man. "Things are very different today than two years ago. So much has happened with the peace process."

Meanwhile, a woman from Har Nof was not so positive, saying, "I feel like it does not matter very much anymore."

Some expressed disappointment in the conduct of MKs, and concern about rifts in the major parties such as the Likud.

"All the MKs are fighting like chil-



Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu confers yesterday in the Knesset plenum with Transport Minister Shaul Yahalom (NRP). (AP)

dren and nobody has stood by Bibi," said Ilana Avdat of Ramat Shazet.

An immigrant from the US, David Errans, saw the lighter side

of the situation. "It could be worse," he said, "At least we don't

have a Monica Lewinsky fiasco over here."

## In search of a political savior

Taking a page out of American political tradition, where a number of crucial presidential

### COMMENT

primaries take place on one critical Monday, our breathless media - eager to mimic anything American - dubbed yesterday's Knesset vote "Super Monday."

"Black Monday" would be more appropriate.

Black Monday, not because Netanyahu fell - whether that is good or bad is very much in the eye of the beholder - but rather because of what this whole political saga says about the state of the nation.

President Bill Clinton, in his dramatic address on the White House lawn following Saturday's impeachment vote, spoke of a need to put an end in the US to the "politics of personal destruction."

Here what is needed is an end to the politics of personal aggrandizement.

Nearly every MK is currently in motion, looking for a new home, better partners, a sweeter deal. Yitzhak Mordechai, one of the Likud's three senior ministers for the last 30 months, is talking with both Labor and the yet-to-be-unveiled centrist party. Amnon Lipkin-Shahak won't join up with Ehud Barak, because he thinks he can win on his own.

Labor and Likud MKs are falling over themselves to talk with the new centrist party. With a few notable exceptions, ideology plays no part; all is sacrificed to runaway ambition.

How different will the new centrist party platform look from that of Likud or Labor? It doesn't even matter. The polls show that this party stands to do well at the ballot box. The reason is not because the party has any grand new plan to solve the Palestinian problem, or jump-start the economy, but simply because it is new and has "serious names." The nation is tired of the existing alternatives, and wants what is new.

The astounding embrace in the polls of Shahak, a political unknown, is more than just a

vote of no confidence in Netanyahu, Barak, and anyone else, out there whose political opinions are actually known. It is also a grasp at fantasy.

We seem a nation obsessed with fantasy. The fantasy of Greater Israel. The fantasy of Peace Now. The fantasy that someone will ride in on a white horse - or with short white hair - and save the nation. The fantasy that new elections will magically change something.

Just as the fantasy that Shahak will be the country's political savior is likely to fade - remember Barak was once seen in the same light - so, too, will the fantasy that new elections will solve the country's problems.

One walks away from the recent political developments with the feeling that this country can't stay a course - any course. Not a sign of great political maturity. If you don't like the government, topple it. If you don't like the system of government, change it. And if you don't like the new system, change it back again. Some will say this is admirable flexibility. Others will say it shows a lack of patience. Impulsiveness.

There is no real reason to believe that after new elections, and the drawn-out coalition negotiations sure to follow, things will be any easier, or better. People around the country are hoping that this time the nation will decide decisively this way or that, one way or the other.

But it is unlikely to happen. The nation has not changed that much in 30 months. The next Knesset will probably not be any less unwieldy than the present one. The cards will just be reshuffled, and two and a half years down the road, we are all likely to be back exactly where we are today - in the midst of political chaos, looking off in desperation to new elections, hungry for a new political savior.

## Coalition haggling before the vote

By LIAT COLLINS

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, surrounded by Likud supporters, last night told reporters in the Knesset that he is confident that he would return to office after early elections.

Coalition chairman Meir Sheerit also told reporters, "We'll be back." But the coalition meeting held in the afternoon to decide how to act in the vote was marked by an exchange between Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon, who has lately been putting his full weight behind the prime minister, and Communications Minister Limor Livnat, rumored to be considering running against Netanyahu.

Sharon reportedly told the closed meeting, "The house is on fire from within," to which Livnat replied, "Don't preach to us."

Tourism Minister Moshe Katzav later tried to play down the incident and told reporters that there was no more tension than usual or

than could be expected.

Netanyahu apparently did not respond to the exchange.

Throughout the day, coalition and opposition leaders met to try to agree on a schedule for the plenum agenda - which foreshadowed the likely problems in finding a mutually acceptable date for elections.

The opposition was against the coalition's demand that Netanyahu be allowed to make a political statement before the dissolution bill came up for first reading and instead wanted the first topic to be a vote on the Meretz no-confidence motion over the freeze in the implementation of the Wye Memorandum. This disagreement continued in meetings of the House Committee and with the Knesset presidium.

Tichon also met with faction heads and asked them to prevail on their MKs to preserve decorum during the debate. The plea apparently fell on deaf ears; heckling was so great that the Speaker was forced to call a couple of breaks in the debate.



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# Poll puts Barak out in front

By MICHAEL YUDELMAN

A Telescop poll conducted yesterday indicates that if four candidates run for prime minister — Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, MK Benny Begin, Labor Party chairman Ehud Barak and former chief of General Staff Amnon Lipkin-Shahak — Barak will get 31 percent, Netanyahu 29%, Shahak 19% and Begin 7.4%.

If only Barak, Netanyahu and Shahak contend, Netanyahu will get 33%, Barak 32% and Shahak 23%.

In the second round, Barak will get 49.9% and Netanyahu 42%, according to the poll.

Barak said yesterday it was completely clear to him, after meeting Shahak the previous night, that Shahak had decided to form a new party with Likud MK Dan Meridor and former Tel Aviv mayor Ronni Milo, rather than join Labor.

"I'm not intervening in their considerations not to join hands and set forth united to topple Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu," Barak said at Labor's Knesset faction meeting. "But I'm sure of our victory, both in the first round and in the second."

Barak called on his faction to unify its ranks with the aim of defeating Netanyahu.



Labor Party chairman Ehud Barak addresses the Knesset yesterday. (Shenon/Hanari)

"Millions of people in the country are counting on us to replace this government and lead the country in a different way," he said. "We must all unite together until victory."

Barak said there would "be a lot of smoke and dust in the next few days, but when this clears it will be obvious that there are only two ways... the Netanyahu government which led it to where it did and our way."

Shahak was expected to announce plans sometime this week to run for prime minister at the head of a new center party.

Pressure is mounting to persuade Shahak to join Labor, as demonstrators outside his house called on him to join Barak. Labor figures are also continuing to meet Shahak in an effort to persuade him to join Labor and not to split the center and left forces.

Milo, who formed the Atid center party six months ago, said he had agreed with Shahak and Meridor that whoever has the best chances of winning the elections, according to the polls close to the election date, will be the party's leader.

Meridor is expected to announce his intentions by the end of the week.

However, neither Meridor nor Shahak have made clear yet whether they intend to join Milo's list or form other ones. Nor is it clear whether the two men agree on which one of them will be the leader and which one will be No. 2.

MK David Magen, formerly of Geshet, said he was trying to persuade Geshet leader MK David Levy to join the center party as well.

Nina Gilbert contributed to this story.



Labor MK Ophir Pines-Paz and Land of Israel Front leader MK Michael Kleiner talk yesterday in the Knesset. (Shenon/Hanari)

## Likud appears to be unravelling

By MICHAEL YUDELMAN

The Likud seemed to be falling apart yesterday amid reports of ministers and MKs either shifting alliances, considering running against Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu or joining another party.

Netanyahu asked Maj.-Gen. (res.) Matan Vilna'i to join the Likud and reportedly even offered him the defense portfolio, while Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, generally acknowledged to be the Likud's most popular minister, was invited by Labor Party chairman Ehud Barak to join Labor.

Mordechai, whose disagreement with Netanyahu over implementing the Wye agreement has caused a rift between them, has called for a national unity government, even at the expense of his own position.

Netanyahu denied reports that he offered Vilna'i the defense post if he wins the next elections, but confirmed on Channel 1 that he

had met Vilna'i and asked him to join the Likud.

"Vilna'i said he was still deliberating and hadn't decided yet," Netanyahu said. "I told him I was sure he would be received very warmly and could get very far."

Vilna'i said he does not rule out the possibility of running for the Knesset as part of a center party, adding he had no problem with either former chief of General Staff Amnon Lipkin-Shahak or Likud MK Dan Meridor.

He noted the ideological differences between the parties has narrowed considerably after the government's acceptance of the Wye agreement.

"The main question is which people one can rely on and go together with," he said.

MK Ze'ev (Beany) Begin was expected to announce he was quitting the Likud after last night's Knesset vote to advance the elections.

According to certain Likud circles, Begin intends to form a new right-wing party,

Tekuma, as an alternative to the Likud. If he does, MKs Michael Kleiner of Geshet and David Re'em of the Likud are expected to join him.

Begin refused to reveal his intentions, but the assumption is that he is determined to leave the Likud as long as it is headed by Netanyahu. If Begin does not form a new party, he may leave political life altogether.

Senior Likud ministers and MKs have been meeting in an effort to find an agreed candidate to contend on the party leadership against Netanyahu.

The potential candidates at this stage are Communications Minister Limor Livnat, Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert and MK Uzi Landau.

Netanyahu's former office director-general Avigdor Lieberman is expected to decide this week whether to form a new immigrants' party, which would compete with Yisrael Ba'aliya or contend for a slot in the Likud's Knesset list.

## Ministers can change even after early elections called

By LIAT COLLINS

Unlike the previous system of a caretaker government, the new system of direct elections allows the prime minister to continue to add new ministers to his cabinet and old ones to leave it right up until polling day, according to Knesset legal adviser Zvi Inbar.

This was one of the facts which arose during a discussion of the Knesset Law Committee on a proposal by committee chairman Hanan Porat (National Religious Party) to extend the minimum period after a no-confidence motion passes before elections must be held.

Currently this stands at 60 days, but Porat wants it changed to 100. One reason for the proposed change is the opinion of the Central Elections Committee (CEC) that the minimum period required to get ready for elections is 100 days and preferably at least 148 days.

CEC director-general Tamar Edri presented the committee with a rundown of the schedule for elections and an explanation of why the extra time is necessary in any case of early elections.

"There is a problem that candidates for prime minister who are not the candidates of one of the factions of the outgoing Knesset have to sign up 50,000 supporters under the Basic Law: 'The Government,'" Edri said. "The current schedule does not give enough time for announcements to the public about the distribution of forms for candidates, and even if we were to give out the forms on the day elections were declared, there would not be enough time for these candidates to gather the necessary 50,000 signatures."

Another problem is that the Electoral Register has to be updated to include all those newly eligible for the vote, such as youths who have turned 18 and new

immigrants.

The register also has to be publicly available for a minimal period of time to allow for appeals by those not included. The CEC also needs to receive this list in time to match up the information with the eligibility of those who signed in support of new candidates for prime minister.

Edri said the pre-election schedule is as follows:

• 53 days before polling day, the interior minister, after consultation with the foreign minister, must draw up the list of embassies and consulates abroad where elections are to be held and the health minister must file a list of hospitals where patients can vote.

• 52 days before polling day the CEC must publish the date for submitting lists of candidates for the Knesset and candidates for prime minister.

• 47 days before polling day the list of candidates needs to be received by the committee.

## MK Ezra criticized for 'sexist' remark

By MICHAEL YUDELMAN

Likud MK Gideon Ezra was criticized yesterday for his remark that Likud supporters would not vote for a woman who was running for prime minister.

Ezra made the comment on Channel 2 on Sunday, while commenting on the prospect of Communication Minister Limor Livnat running for prime minister.

"I think she's an excellent minister, but the Likud's potential voters, in my opinion, won't vote

for her, if only because she's a woman," he said.

Ezra said yesterday that while he has nothing against women, "in the matter of candidate for prime minister for the Likud, I would not support a woman because of the electoral consideration."

He maintained that the Likud's potential coalition partners, such as the religious parties, would not support a woman for prime minister and this reduced the chances of success for a female candidate.

Prime Minister Binyamin

Netanyahu issued a statement yesterday saying every person, man or woman, can contend for prime minister or any other senior position. This was proven only a few weeks ago in the Likud, when its candidate Miriam Fireberg was elected as mayor of Netanya, one of the seven large cities in Israel, the statement said.

WIZO Israel chairperson Thelma Neri is demanding an immediate debate in the Likud central committee regarding the continuation of Ezra's member-

ship in the party, following "his chauvinistic statement." Neri said in a letter to the Likud chairman that, "MK Ezra is a public figure and cannot afford to insult half the population. Those who have done so before have paid for it."

Chairperson of the Knesset Committee on the Status of Women MK Marina Solodkin said, "Ezra didn't think through before he cast doubt on the Likud voters' support for Livnat for prime minister because she is a woman."

## It all started with the Wye agreement: How the coalition fell apart

The coalition began to seriously unravel after Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu signed the Wye Memorandum in October, and then failed to win support for it

from a majority of his ministers, including those from his own Likud party.

Less than a week after the signing, and before it was approved by the cabinet, the government survived a confidence motion on the first reading of the budget by just one vote, thanks to the assistance of five Arab MKs who wanted to ensure the approval and implementation of the Wye accord.

After the vote, however,

Netanyahu said in the future he wouldn't depend on the vote of non-Zionist MKs for important national matters. In response, Democratic Arab Party leader Abdul Wahab Darawshe promised to punish Netanyahu in future votes.

When Netanyahu brought the accord before the cabinet, only eight ministers approved it, while four voted against and five Likud ministers abstained.

### BACKGROUND

By NINA GILBERT

Salt was added to Netanyahu's wounds when the Wye accord passed in the Knesset by a vote of 75-19, with the support of only 29 coalition MKs. Five Likud ministers, Tsomet's Agriculture and Environment Minister Rafael Eitan

and Absorption Minister Yuli Edelstein (Yisrael Ba'aliya) absent themselves from the vote.

The result was that during the vote, Netanyahu was sitting nearby by himself in the cabinet's section in the plenum, a scene that underscored his isolation in the Knesset.

Two other ministers, Finance Minister Yaakov Neeman and Interior Minister Eli Suissa, who are not MKs but who supported the agreement, did not bother to show up for the vote.

More significant, however, was the opposition of all members of the National Religious Party faction, including Transport Minister Shaul Yahalom and Education Minister Yitzhak Levy.

When Netanyahu began delaying the first phase of the Wye withdrawal, the Labor Party removed its "safety net" — its agreement to shore up the government against challenges for the sake of the peace process.

The NRP then began using the pending early elections bill as blackmail against the government, to try to ensure that there would be no further withdrawals under the Wye accord.

The precarious situation led Netanyahu to the abortive attempt to bring Geshet leader David Levy back into the coalition.

It also caught Netanyahu in a trap between the Left and Right, with Geshet, the Arab parties, Land of

Israel Front leader MK Michael Kleiner, the two Moledet MKs, and Likud MKs Ze'ev (Beany) Begin and Dan Meridor planting themselves firmly against the Netanyahu government for different, often opposing reasons.

The momentum for early elections got a boost from US President Bill Clinton, since Netanyahu's tough talk during Clinton's visit irked Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, who objected to Netanyahu's sending Clinton home nearly empty-handed.

The resignation of Neeman, who was unable to get up a Knesset majority to approve the economic arrangements bill, added to Netanyahu's troubles.

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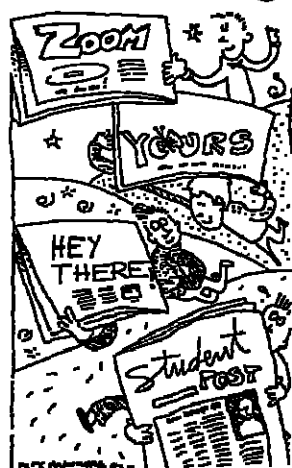
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# Six teens charged in raping classmate

By Jerusalem Post Staff and Itim

Six teenage boys from the center of the country were charged in Tel Aviv District Court yesterday with raping and sexually assaulting a 16-year-old girl in the parking lot of her school and one of their homes several times over the past month. The boys, who range in age from 15 to 17, claim that the victim consented to have sex with them.

"That is really not true," the victim told Army Radio yesterday. "I didn't even

know them. I tried to stand up to them and run away. Everything happened under threats and by force - the last time there was a kitchen knife."

According to the charge sheet, the teens threatened to ruin her reputation by spreading rumors about her at her school, which four of them also attend.

"A boy from my school wanted to go out with me," she told the radio. "I went with him. There was another boy from our class and two other boys I didn't know. They asked me to do things and threat-

ened that if I didn't do what they asked they would cause problems for me at school, that they would spread rumors about me so that I would have to switch to another school.

"After that incident, they called me two more times. At school, the boy from my class beat me and spit at me.

"I know another boy who can influence him. I thought that if I spoke with him, he would help me," she continued. "I called him and told him what had happened. He told me to come to him and he would

straighten everything out. I went to him and this happened - the rape."

She said that the second teen raped her at his home, in front of his brother and another youth, while their parents were in another room.

The court remanded the teens until next Tuesday, when their next hearing is scheduled.

They were arrested last week.

Police began investigating the case two weeks ago, after the victim and her father filed a complaint with Tel Aviv police.

## Violence vs. teachers reportedly increasing

By ARYEH DEAN COHEN

A school principal whose hand was broken when a parent threw a calculator at him and a teacher injured in the chest when a pupil threw a chair at him are just two victims of violence against school staff in recent months reported by the Union of Local Authorities in Israel.

According to the ULAI, the incidents reported in recent months included attacks on teachers' cars, threats, thefts, break-ins to their homes, kicks and attacks by the pupils' parents.

Shmuel Abuav, chairman of the ULAI's education committee, said many of the complaints are kept secret, while others are publicized only after a complaint is filed with police.

Among them was an incident in a Jerusalem school in which a pupil kicked a teacher in the testicles and one in Beersheba in which a pupil hit his teacher in the forehead with a ruler after being told to leave the class for being nude.

In the western Galilee, a 15-year-old student is suspected of breaking into his teacher's apartment four times with a key he stole from her and then copied.

The break-ins occurred following each of four incidents in which he was asked to leave the class after misbehaving.

Meanwhile, a poll conducted towards the end of the last school year for the ULAI also indicated that verbal and physical violence vs.

teachers and principals is increasing.

According to the poll, published this week by the ULAI, some 30% of pupils questioned reported incidents in which teachers were cursed, 67% recalling pupils talking impolitely to teachers, 9% said they themselves used violence against teachers, 7% said they used objects in such violence, and 5% said they threatened them.

Only 15% said they had not encountered any disciplinary problems in the schools.

Analyzing the problem, Abuav said research by American experts indicates that the lower the level of the classroom instruction, the more violence there is within it. School size and class size are also contributing factors, Abuav said.

Abuav suggested that the Education Ministry look into the matter of class size and violence, and to look into finding solutions to the problem. He also called for taking stronger steps against violent pupils and giving principals the right to impose stronger punishments against such pupils.

Schools should also have the proper number of school psychologists and guidance counselors to deal with problematic pupils, he added.

"In light of the increasing violence in the schools, we must act to neutralize the factors that lead to such violence. Moreover, stiffening punishments may deter those who commit such acts and help create an atmosphere where pupils and teachers who are attacked do not feel they've been abandoned," he said.

## NEWS

in brief

### Cyprus to try alleged Israeli spies next month

Two Israelis charged with spying on Cyprus pleaded innocent yesterday in a Cyprus court. The court postponed their trial until next month and denied their request to be released on bail.

Israel has denied that the two were spying on Cyprus on behalf of Turkey, but hasn't said what their mission was. Udi Hargov, 37, and Igal Damary, 49, were brought to court handcuffed and guarded by armed members of the special police anti-terrorist squad. Neither spoke during the brief proceedings, except to plead innocent to three separate charges.

Their trial is to open January 20. They face a maximum sentence of 10 years.



Udi Hargov (AP)

### Drug and sex crimes on the rise in the IDF

There has been a breakdown in the system dealing with drug offenders in the IDF as a result of lighter sentencing of offenders, IDF Judge Advocate-General Brig.-Gen. Uri Shoham told a press conference yesterday. "Light punishments give a bad impression to the troops. We must send out a message of deterrence."

Though there has been a slight drop in the number of general drug convictions in the IDF in the past year, convictions related to hard drugs has risen significantly. There has also been a 43 percent rise in convictions for sexual offenses since 1997.

### Polish premier seeks better relations with Israel

Polish Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek yesterday called a rift with Israel over a scrapped missile deal "a temporary misunderstanding" and said he wants to improve relations between the countries.

Buzek's government decided on December 8 to halt the deal reached last year to buy Israeli missiles for Poland's Huzar helicopters. Israeli officials have criticized the move and threatened possible legal action. It was the latest in a series of disputes between Poland and Israel this year, including an ongoing argument over crosses erected on property adjoining Auschwitz. On the scrapped missile deal, Buzek said his government waited for eight months for Israel to field test the NTD missile in Poland. The tests never happened. "It is the Polish side which should be disappointed," he said, calling the decision to scrap the deal "painful."

### Knesset panel backs civil marriage

A majority of the Knesset Immigration and Absorption Committee yesterday backed civil marriage as an answer to the growing number of Israelis who are unable to marry via the Chief Rabbinate. "We must find alternative solutions for those who are unable to marry, women who cannot remarry because they are unable to obtain a divorce, and mixed couples," said committee chairwoman Naomi Blumenthal.

Committee member Shulamit Aloni added that "Many Israelis, their children and spouses are discriminated against. The Knesset must find a way to solve the problem and give them an option that is not dependent on the Chief Rabbinate." The committee plans to discuss the matter with the chief rabbis.



### Free Christmas trees

Danish Ambassador Hans Michael Kofoed-Hansen and his wife, Vibeke (at left), select a Christmas tree at the Jewish National Fund forest at Givat Yeshayahu yesterday, assisted by JNF forester Edward Pinkas. The JNF distributes thousands of trees free of charge each year to the Christian community, press corps, and UN and US soldiers stationed here.

## High Court: Those appearing before rabbinical courts must cover heads

By HAIM SHAPIRO

Attorneys and litigants who appear before rabbinical courts must cover their heads, according to a ruling by the High Court of Justice.

The court yesterday rejected a petition by Tel Aviv attorney Zvi Rish, who said the requirement to appear before the rabbinical courts with a head covering interfered with his freedom of religion and conscience.

The court ruled that the wearing of a kippa in the Rabbinical Court was a sign of respect for the rabbinical court judges and not the imposition of a religious commandment.

The petition came after Rish had undertaken to represent a client in divorce proceedings in the Petah Tikva District Rabbinical Court. At the outset of the proceedings, he was asked to wear a kippa, in keeping with the regulations of the

rabbinical courts.

Rish told the rabbinical court that he was an atheist, and it was a principle of his belief not to carry out any religious tradition, including covering his head with a kippa.

When the rabbinical court rejected his request, he petitioned the High Court.

The justices ruled that wearing a kippa or otherwise covering one's head was not a religious commandment but a Jewish custom which had developed over the years.

It was originally considered to indicate an individual's piety and restricted to serious occasions, such as appearance before a court.

Only later, the justices said, did covering one's head become a religious requirement, out of a desire to differentiate between Jewish society and that of the non-Jewish world. Eventually, they added, the wearing of a kippa became a symbol of an observant Jew, when part of Jewish society became secular.

They added that those appearing before the rabbinical courts were free to choose a head covering which had no religious significance.

In reaction to the decision, Rabbi Uri Regev, director of the Reform movement's Israel Religious Action Center, said he accepted and agreed with the ruling and he himself, as a Reform rabbi and a lawyer, saw no difficulty in wearing a kippa, although he normally only did so for prayer and religious functions.

However, while he was willing to accord full respect to the Orthodox institutions, he drew the line in areas where such institutions denied others their religious freedom and basic liberties.

"When they go out of their institutions and encroach upon the lives of others, that's where we have to fight them, in the courts, in the realm of public opinion and in the Knesset," Regev said.

Itim contributed to this report.

## Grapes of Wrath monitoring group: IDF, SLA responsible for civilian death

By DAVID RUDGE

The Grapes of Wrath monitoring group determined yesterday that the IDF and the South Lebanese Army were responsible for killing a 17-year-old civilian in south Lebanon last week.

The five-nation committee said the death of the youth was the result of firing by Israel "and those cooperating with it" and constituted a violation of the understandings that were reached at the end of Operation Grapes of Wrath in April 1996.

Lebanon had lodged a complaint with the monitoring group over the incident, which occurred last Thursday near Shakra village, north of the security zone.

Reports from Lebanon at the time said the youth was killed by IDF commandos after he left his home on the edge of the village to buy groceries. The monitoring group did not accept another Lebanese complaint over what was described in some Lebanese newspapers as "sonic bombing" by IAF warplanes breaking the sound barriers over various parts of Lebanon, including Beirut, more than a week ago.

The IDF Spokesman, in a statement issued at the conclusion of the monitoring group's meeting at UNIFIL's headquarters in Nakoura, said the committee had determined that this issue was outside its parameters.

Furthermore, it was impossible to determine whether such overflights constituted a breach of the understandings.

The spokesman said the monitoring group - composed of representatives from the U.S., France, Israel, Syria and Lebanon - had recognized three complaints from Israel over violations of the understandings.

These related to the firing of mortars from inside Jaba and Majdal Salim villages, north of the zone, by Hizbullah gunmen during fighting in the region last week.

The monitoring group saw a video film which showed shells being fired from a vehicle close to a house in Majdal Salim. The vehicle was destroyed a few moments later by an air-to-ground missile fired by an IAF helicopter gunship, the IDF Spokesman said.

## BEZEQ INTERNATIONAL DIRECT DIALING RATES, STARTING DECEMBER 21, 1998

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Finland	NIS 0.98
Denmark, Holland, Norway, Spain, France, Sweden	NIS 1.13
Britain (Scotland), Germany	NIS 1.19
Italy, Vatican City, Switzerland	NIS 1.32
Austria, Belgium, Greece	NIS 1.37
Poland	NIS 1.50
Hungary	NIS 1.68
Ukraine, Turkey, Russia	NIS 1.99
Andorra, Lichtenstein, Monaco, Portugal, Cyprus, Iceland, Kazakhstan	NIS 2.61
Uzbekistan, Bulgaria, Belarus, Tajikistan, Yugoslavia, Luxembourg, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, The Czech Republic	NIS 3.71
Azerbaijan, Albania, Estonia, Armenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Gibraltar, Georgia, Greenland, Turkmenistan, Malta, Macedonia, Slovenia, Faroe Islands, Kyrgyzstan, Croatia	NIS 4.13
Moldova, Romania	NIS 4.57
San Marino	NIS 6.45
America	
Dominican Republic	NIS 0.53
United States, Alaska, Hawaii	NIS 0.80
Argentina	NIS 1.53
Mexico	NIS 1.58
Panama, Canada	NIS 1.99
Uruguay, Bolivia, Paraguay, Chile, Colombia	NIS 2.61
Brazil	NIS 3.99
El Salvador, Antilles (Neth.), Anguilla, Antigua, Grenada, Ecuador, Aruba, Bahamas, Belize, Barbados, Bermuda, Guadeloupe, Guatemala, British Guyana, French Guiana, Jamaica, Dominica, Haiti, Honduras, Virgin Is. (U.S.), Virgin Is. (British), Venezuela, Turks and Caicos Is., Trinidad, Montserrat, Martinique, Nicaragua, Surinam, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, Puerto Rico, Peru, Cuba, Costa Rica, Cayman Is.	NIS 6.45
Africa	
Morocco	NIS 1.37
South Africa	NIS 2.09
Ethiopia, Egypt	NIS 5.31
Uganda, Angola, Eritrea, Botswana, Burundi, Burkina Faso, Benin, Ghana, Gabon, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Gambia, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Ivory Coast, Togo, Tanzania, Liberia, Lesotho, Mauritania, Mauritius, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Central Africa, Niger, Nigeria, Namibia, Swaziland, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Seychelles, Senegal, Congo, Congo (Zaire), Cameroon, Kenya, Reunion, Rwanda	NIS 5.73
Algeria, Equatorial Guinea, Tunisia, Libya, Maus, Comoros	NIS 6.45
Oceania	
Australia	NIS 2.09
New Zealand	NIS 5.31
Tonga, Mariana, Marshall, Norfolk, Western Samoa, Solomon Is., French Polynesia, Fiji, Palau, Papua New Guinea, New Caledonia	NIS 5.73
Asia	
Singapore	NIS 1.50
Hong Kong	NIS 1.88
Taiwan, Japan	NIS 2.61
South Korea	NIS 3.28
Thailand	NIS 4.13
India	NIS 5.31
Indonesia, Malaysia, Macao, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan	NIS 5.73
Maldives Is., Bhutan, Bangladesh, Brunei, Guam, Vietnam, Laos, Mongolia, Myanmar (Burma), Nationalist China, Philippines, Cambodia	NIS 6.45
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Catar	NIS 5.73
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Abroad: Within Western Europe	
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## Shades of history

He was born in the southern United States and raised in poverty by a widow. He entered local politics at a young age and, molded by the hardships of his early life, he became a confirmed Democrat who learned to empathize with the common people rather than with the elite of his home state.

### Column One



Thomas O'Dwyer

He was first elected state governor, but when he became president, he was dogged by the irrational hatred of Republican rightists who seized on a flimsy excuse to entrap and impeach him for high crimes and misdemeanors.

They passed the articles of impeachment in the House of Representatives, but at the subsequent trial in the Senate, the president survived and finished his term.

After the 1963 assassination of John F. Kennedy, imaginative commentators documented eerie echoes from the murder of Abraham Lincoln. (Lincoln was killed in a theater and his assassin fled to a warehouse; Kennedy was shot from a warehouse and his killer hid in a theater - and so on.)

Believers in the recurring circles of history are at it again, comparing the impeachment of Bill Clinton to that of Andrew Johnson 130 years ago.

### Magic bullet

Clinton's army of supporters predict he will go all the way like Johnson and be acquitted in the Senate trial, but with a bigger majority than Johnson won.

The single bullet that killed Lincoln propelled Johnson into the presidency, a single vote kept him there. Strollers among the shades of history may muse over the fact that the bullet that killed Kennedy inspired the young Clinton (also of Irish descent) to model his political philosophy on the slain heroic president. Now, like Lincoln's protégé, he too needs a magic bullet in the Senate vote.

Kennedy, in his Pulitzer-winning book *Profiles in Courage*, made space for Senator Edmund Ross, the Republican from Kansas who cast the Senate vote that saved Johnson from impeachment, but which ruined Ross's career and life. By his courage in resisting fierce partisan pressure at the last minute, Ross saved US constitutional government, wrote Kennedy.

Johnson was impeached for firing secretary of war Edwin M. Stanton, infuriating radical Republicans who hated Johnson's soft touch in reconstructing the post-Civil War South.

The Tenure of Office Act barred a president from firing any officer confirmed by the Senate. The Republican-dominated House used this legalism to throw the book at the president. They cobbled together a vicious 11 articles of impeachment and passed them by 126 votes to 47.

### Right and wrong

By nature or coincidence, Clinton also seemed to model his sexual attitudes on those

of Kennedy but, unfortunately, the Camelot days were gone when the media averted their eyes from what was considered none of their business.

Instead, Clinton has fallen foul both of the insatiable salacious press and of a Republican establishment still high on self-righteous indignation that one of those pro-grass, anti-war, free-love, saxophone-playing liberals of the '60s actually made it into the White House. And he belongs to that party that hounded that patriotic Richard Nixon out of office by incompetently allowing its

offices to be burgled. Even worse, Clinton has proved to be good at the job and to be consistently admired by a majority of the people and the world. But he has given good old-fashioned Republican infidelity a bad name by getting most of the women of America, from his wife onwards, to beam forgivingly at him and stand by his side.

The judgment of the time or of history has not been kind to the "shaggy mountain of Republican malice" (the words of a contemporary writer) that bore down upon Andrew Johnson, a president who was honest and honorable, but definitely unfortunate in the virulence of his foes.

Seekers of historical parallels should note the heavy casualties falling on Republicans as they seek to crucify Clinton on the Congressional altar of Christian righteousness. (Who put the Right in righteous?)

There were the disastrous mid-term elections, followed by the departure of Newt (the Gingrich who stole Christmas), and the transformation of a Livingston into a dead rock around Republican necks.

### Larry the lad

Nor does it appear to be over yet. It may be a sorry spectacle of American politics gone berserk, but there is something satisfying in watching Republican hypocrites being outed by Larry Flynt, pornographer-at-large. Many of those most vocal about impeaching a president for the sin of lying about an affair are being revealed as liars about many affairs.

Flynt is from that sort of sleazy male world where good-ole boys used to be able to hang out in peace and escape from the tedium of being always right and upright. *Playboy* and *Hustler* fans, they could sink a few beers, cackle over sordid jokes at the expense of fags and liberals and blacks and women, maybe chase a bit of tail, before heading home to a family-values dinner with a nice, faithful wife and well-brought-up kids. Over dinner the *pater familias* could bemoan the moral corruption liberals and abortionists were bringing to the American way of life.

The main threat to Republican Gotham's God-fearing Supermen has been this dangerous substance called Clintonite. It still is.

# The Republicans vs. Larry Flynt

Thanks to a \$1m. offer made by the publisher of 'Hustler', the Monica Lewinsky affair is giving way to a series of media exposures of the sex lives of Republican lawmakers

By HOWARD KURTZ

When Larry Flynt can use sexual disclosures to bring down the incoming House speaker on the day the president is impeached for lying about sex, something has obviously changed in the media and political culture.

The stunning announcement by Speaker-elect Bob Livingston that he will resign, just 40 hours after admitting to extramarital affairs uncovered by the *Hustler* publisher, shows that even an eccentric pornographer can use cash and trash to topple an elected leader.

A year that began with saturation coverage of President Clinton's affair with a young intern is ending, with a series of media exposures of the sex lives of Republican lawmakers.

Asked about Livingston's resignation this weekend, Flynt said: "I'm happy if my efforts had anything to do with it. I think right-wing radical bullies like him are more of a threat to our unique form of democracy than anything else."

While Flynt told CNN he believes sex "should be a private matter," he added: "Desperate times deserve desperate actions. Look at what they were doing to the president."

Flynt's role in offering up to \$1 million for sexual dirt on members of Congress "reduces this whole thing to the theater of the absurd and a lowest common denominator that even the scoundrels among us don't want to achieve," said Martin Fitzwater, who was White House spokesman for Ronald Reagan and George Bush.

"There's virtually no zone of privacy left for any public official," said Sanford Ungar, dean of American University's School of Communication. "And there are many co-conspirators in creating that situation - politicians themselves, the media, the Internet... This town has gone nuts."

Bizarre as Flynt's involvement seems, *Hustler* is merely the latest media outlet to scrutinize the private lives of public officials. From the *Miami Herald* to the *National Enquirer*, from *Newsweek* to *Matt Drudge*, from the *Indianapolis Star* to *Salon*, the old limits on what was deemed fair game for aggressive journalists have been all but obliterated. There are simply too many pathways - front door, back door, basement drainpipes - for sleaze to drip its way into the mainstream media.

No news organization says it is delving into sexual matters simply for salacious effect, or to sell newspapers or grab ratings share. The investigations are generally attributed to the importance of some larger value, such as character, dishonesty or hypocrisy. This, of course, has been the mantra of prosecutors. Republicans and many journalists in probing Clinton's relationship with Monica Lewinsky - the notion that it's not about sex, it's about perjury. But that in turn has



Larry Flynt vows that Livingston is only his first victim: 'I assure you, there are many others to come... We intend to take this to the mat, all the way.'

emboldened some journalists to ask "whether those judging the president have sexual skeletons in their own closets."

"Even Larry Flynt, while he's doing it for publicity, in his own twisted way has a history of using embarrassment and sexuality to expose what he sees as hypocrisy," said Tom Rosenstiel, director of the Project for Excellence in Journalism. In today's hyperactive media world, he said, "there are no gatekeepers anymore. These things are no longer vetted by the press. They're vetted by the public."

The spate of sexual outings in the last four months have all been framed as a reaction to Republican criticism of Clinton and Lewinsky.

That was the rationale offered by the *Indianapolis Star* and *News* in reporting that Rep. Dan Burton, R-Ind., had fathered a son out of wedlock, and by the *Idaho Statesman* in disclosing that Rep. Helen Chenoweth, R-Idaho, had had a relationship with a married

man. *Salon*, the left-leaning online magazine, declared - flatly - that "ugly times require ugly tactics" in unearthing a 30-year-old affair by Judiciary Committee Chairman Henry Hyde, R-Ill.

Livingston, like his GOP colleagues, pre-empted the *Hustler* disclosure late Thursday by acknowledging the affair - giving the mainstream press a license to report them without having to wrestle with Flynt's credibility. Other politicians may face the same dilemma, for Flynt says his big-bucks offer has produced information on infidelities by up to a dozen members of Congress and senior officials.

FOR the press, which was uninterested in sexual high jinks as recently as John Kennedy's administration, change came slowly. It was a rare event in 1976 when *The Washington Post* reported that then-Rep. Wayne Hays was having an affair with a staffer, Elizabeth Ray, who famously

declared she could not type. Hays decided not to seek re-election three months later, citing "the harassment my family and I have taken from *The Washington Post*."

In 1987, when five *Miami Herald* reporters stalked out Gary Hart's Washington town house, the resulting story about Hart and Donna Rice knocked him out of the presidential campaign. But five years later, candidate Bill Clinton survived the allegations of a long-term affair by a onetime lounge singer named Gennifer Flowers. In a harbinger of the new mercenary culture, Flowers sold her story to the supermarket tabloid *Star*, whose article quickly ricocheted into the mainstream media.

In the summer of 1992, a footnote in a book quoting a dead ambassador alleged that President Bush had had an affair with a longtime aide. The flimsy charge quickly made the front page of the *New York Post*, and a CNN reporter asked Bush about it at a

news conference, prompting the president to denounce the network for its "sleazy questions."

"I don't think you can ask the press to ignore the fools and idiots in our society," Fitzwater said. "Everyone knew from the beginning that the press would find a way to get it on the record and make it public."

By contrast, Fitzwater praised *The Washington Post* for deciding not to publish a 1996 article about a 28-year-old affair by GOP presidential candidate Bob Dole. *The Washington Post* mentioned the affair in a larger story as the *National Enquirer* ran an interview with the woman, but most of the press decided it was too old to be relevant to the campaign.

If there are clear guidelines on how to handle such sensitive stories, on the distinctions between news and gossip, few have been able to articulate them. After Paula Jones accused Clinton of sexual harassment in 1994, it took nearly three months for *The Washington Post* to become the first major newspaper to feature her charges, in a front-page story by Michael Isikoff. And Jones' lawsuit inexorably led to Clinton's deposition last January, in which he denied having had an affair with Lewinsky.

Even that story, fueled by an independent counsel's investigation, needed a push from an unexpected source. When *Newsweek*, having hired Isikoff, held his story about Lewinsky, the *Drudge Report* sent the key details hurtling across cyberspace. Three days later, the story broke in *The Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times* and on ABC, sparking a yearlong frenzy that has turned off much of the public, even as it led to Saturday's impeachment.

INTO this crazy-quilt environment stepped a man who makes his living publishing pictures of naked women. Many people snickered in October when Flynt announced his sexual sweepstakes; now they're wondering whether Livingston is only his first victim.

"I assure you, there are many others to come... We intend to take this to the mat, all the way," Flynt said.

At the same time, he said it wasn't necessary for Livingston to resign because "having an extramarital affair in itself has nothing to do with your leadership ability, your ability to function as a legislator."

One outcome of such personal investigations could be "just a blind anti-journalism hatred," said Charlie Peters, editor of the *Washington Monthly*. "... It's just terrifying to go into public life today and know there's going to be all this inquiry into your private life."

Ungar says the public is certain to blame the media for this chaotic era of sexual investigations. "The only question is, how many times will the messenger get shot and what will the weapon be? Will it be a mere handgun or a bazooka?" (Washington Post)

## The BBC is not free

Licensing officers plan to use high-tech equipment to ensure that the British pay for TV

By JEFF DAESCHNER

For many British families, watching James Bond on TV at Christmas is as much of a

Yuletide tradition as turkey, pudding and presents.

But as they watch Britain's favorite fictional spy they may be unwitting targets of new high-tech espionage equipment that would be worthy of 007 himself.

In the run-up to the peak Christmas television season, Britain has unveiled state-of-the-art scanners to catch couch potatoes who commit one of the country's more arcane crimes - watching TV without a permit.

In Britain, if you want to see a *License to Kill*, you need a license to watch. Otherwise, you face a summons to court and a fine of up to £1,000 (\$1,677).

Under the British Broadcasting Corporation's (BBC) unique funding system, television viewers must pay an annual fee of £97.50 (\$163.50) per home for color TV licenses and £32.50 for black and white permits.

Those fees will rise next year to £101 and £33.50, respectively.

Like the BBC, many European state broadcasters levy license fees. But they also carry advertising, whereas the BBC is ad-free, relying solely on public funds for its core services.

The BBC's license fee income topped £2.1 billion last year to pay for its two flagship TV channels, which produce the sitcoms, documentaries and dramas that have established its global reputation as a benchmark for quality.

The TV tax also funds the BBC's ad-free national and local radio stations, as well as its high-

ly-popular Internet services and its new digital TV and radio offerings.

But TV tax dodgers cost the BBC some £160 million in lost income each year, according to TV Licensing, the Post Office branch that has collected the license fee for the BBC.

TV Licensing aims to recoup some of that money by arming its "enquiry officers" with hand-held scanners and sophisticated computer backup systems.

"It does look a bit science fiction," says TV Licensing spokeswoman Tracey Benton, describing the streamlined scanners. "It's very much different from the last equipment we had, which was very big, cumbersome, and difficult to use."

TV Licensing is part of an Anglo-French consortium that recently won a £500 million contract to handle license fee collection over the next seven years, starting in April.

TV Licensing's partners in the Envision group are the French computer company Bull, which will handle the information systems, while the British ad agency WPP Group will design its advertising campaigns.

TV Licensing's new scanners use triangulation technology to pinpoint TV sets by detecting the magnetic radiation given off by their screens. This means officers can ferret out rogue TV sets even when they're switched off.

If they're switched on, the inspectors can detect the broadcast

signal with the computer systems in their vans. As a result, officers can simultaneously watch the same program on their computers that their culprits are watching on TV.

"The person in the house can switch the telly off. But we will already have detected it. And then our enquiry officer is in a position to go and take a statement," Benton says.

WHEN confronted, most TV tax dodgers will confess their guilt. "Most people would say 'It's a fair cop, mate,' because we can see the TV blaring in the background," Benton says.

"But people who are trying to be cunning will come up with an excuse. We have had all sorts of bizarre excuses." Like the time an inspector, visiting at Christmas, confronted a tax dodger by noting that the TV set was warm.

"Oh, no no," the TV fee dodger said. "It hasn't been working, we haven't been using the TV. That's why the TV set's warm."

Then there are the people who own color TV sets but try to make do with a monochrome permit.

"Somebody said, 'It's my rabbit that watches TV and he's colour blind anyway so we only need a black and white license,'" Benton says.

IN their campaign to stamp out TV tax evasion, TV Licensing officers launch strategic "blitzes" on neighborhoods, timing their visits around popular soap operas

like *Eastenders* or near-sacred sports events like the World Cup. TV Licensing even had inspectors knocking on people's doors during England's ill-fated match against Argentina, which destroyed England's hopes of winning the Cup in one of the most dramatic matches of the competition.

"We have female enquiry officers too," Benton said with a laugh. "A few of our enquiry officers drew the short straw and had to go out visiting during England (and Scotland) matches." As a result, TV Licensing netted 30,000 TV tax dodgers during the tournament.

THE launch of the new equipment comes as British Culture Minister Chris Smith prepares to set up an independent panel next year to consider ways of supplementing the license fee, which will remain in place until at least 2006.

Options include increasing the BBC's commercial activities - which are separate from its publicly-funded operations - as well as seeking sponsorship for some of the BBC's periphery channels to raise funds.

But Smith isn't expected to advocate sponsorship or ads on the BBC's core programs.

"We aspire to remain publicly funded," BBC Director-General John Birt said this month. "Our primary purposes are and will remain public, not commercial. But we will continue to exploit public assets vigorously for the public benefit." (Reuters)

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150 من الاصل



# UK: Air strikes left Iraqi air defense in ruins

LONDON (AP) — US and British air strikes on Iraq targeted 100 sites and left the Iraqi air defense system "in ruins" and Saddam Hussein weakened, Prime Minister Tony Blair's office said yesterday.

The prime minister's spokesman said sites targeted during the four-day bombardment that ended Saturday included 20 command and control facilities and nine sites linked to the elite Republican Guard.

Attacks on 35 other targets "have left the Iraqi air defense system in ruins," said the spokesman.

Six of the targets were related to delivery systems for Iraq's remote-piloted weapons of mass destruction, he said.

"We believe the damage that has been inflicted in the last few days has left Saddam very weak and vulnerable," the spokesman said.

Foreign Secretary Robin Cook said Britain's next step would be to try to isolate Iraq in the world community and reduce any support Saddam's regime has among Arab nations.

Cook said there also would be new attempts to get humanitarian aid directly to the Iraqi people.

"It's not going to be easy," he told BBC Radio, "because Saddam does everything possible to obstruct and prevent it, and it is very difficult to operate in Iraq without Saddam's agreement, given the brutality and savagery with which he represses all opposition."

After a meeting later with German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, Cook said the European Union would participate in the

humanitarian efforts.

Cook said Britain also wants to ensure the United Nations monitoring of Iraq's weapons program is maintained and that sanctions are better enforced. Iraq says it will no longer tolerate the weapons inspections.

Cook said the military strikes had also destroyed Saddam's ability to jam radio programs being broadcast into Iraq from opposition groups and news programs. "We can try now to get the truth into the Iraqi people," he said.

Cook said he was speaking with European and Arab leaders to try to build support for non-military action against Iraq.

Eight Arab states — including Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Syria — warned Baghdad last month that it would be "held responsible for any consequences" of not cooperating with UN officials. But no Arab government expressed support for the air strikes — which were condemned by the world's largest Moslem group, the 52-nation Organization of the Islamic Conference.

The United States said Sunday the air strikes had achieved their specific military objectives, and that US policy is shifting toward toppling Saddam. But even using highly touted laser-guided bombs, more than a quarter of the air strikes launched from the aircraft carrier USS Enterprise missed their main targets, naval commanders said yesterday.

American officials praised the percentage as exceptionally good and denied claims by Iraq that hospitals or other civilian sites could have

been hit by misdirected US air strikes.

"I can say that everyone is very pleased with the success of the air strikes," said Rear Adm. J. Cutler Dawson Jr., commander of the eight- vessel Enterprise battle group in the Gulf. "This is an impressive figure."

The ship's air wing commander, Capt. Tom Hagen, told the Enterprise crew that preliminary analyses showed 72 percent of the air strikes were on target. Digital video images of all the air strikes are getting a more detailed review at Central Command in Tampa, Florida.

The success rate estimate did not take into account Tomahawk cruise missile strikes and only included the more than 300 missions flown off the Enterprise during the four nights of attacks. Another 350 sorties were flown off the ground, including B-2 and B-1 bombers and Britain's Tornado fighter-bombers.

The majority of the bombs fired by the F/A-18 and F-14 warplanes were the so-called "smart bombs" fitted with laser-guided navigation systems, weapons system chiefs said. The rest were conventional bombs — ranging from 500 pounds to 2,000 pounds — that free fall from the planes. Officers on the ship refused to give a precise breakdown of the types used in the raids.

During the assault, 425 Tomahawk missiles were fired and Iraq says it shot down more than 100 of them. Dawson said 325 Tomahawks were fired from the ships in the Enterprise battle group. The others were launched from B-2 bombers.



A crowd in Khartoum burns US, British, and Israeli flags yesterday in a demonstration by thousands of Sudanese angry at the air strikes on Iraq. (AP)

## Iraqis: Sanctions worse than air strikes

BAGHDAD (Reuters) — Baghdad residents, worn down by years of sanctions, said yesterday they were ready to endure more air strikes if they would hasten an end to the economic embargo on Iraq.

"These strikes have killed 150 or 200 people, but the sanctions have killed millions," claimed Rushdi Abdul-Hussein, a clothes seller in Baghdad's Kadhimiya market.

The US and Britain called off Sunday a four-day-long air campaign against Iraq after striking what they said were scores of military and intelligence targets.

The attacks were launched after UN weapons inspectors, who must declare Iraq free of biological, chemical and long-range weapons facilities before the sanctions are lifted, said Iraq had reneged on a pledge of full cooperation.

"It's very important to lift the sanctions. They can inspect for a lifetime as long as they first lift the sanctions," Abdul-Hussein said.

The sanctions were imposed on Iraq for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Iraqis, who had already endured an eight-year war with neighboring Iran, then faced six weeks of Western bombardment before a US-led coalition drove Iraqi troops from Kuwait.

The embargo has caused widespread hardship among ordinary Iraqis, with hungry children and their malnourished mothers seen on the streets of Baghdad begging for alms.

"We are like a boxer. We have been hit before," said Abdul-Hussein.

A pharmacist nearby said Iraq's fate had more to do with US President Bill Clinton's personal political problems than Iraq's compliance with the UN inspectors.

"Because of Clinton's circumstances he decided to hit. When he attacked he did it without discussing it with the Security Council," he said.

"We hope the sanctions are lifted. Sometimes

I don't have even aspirin to give to people," he added, turning away a customer seeking asthma drugs.

Other shopkeepers at the bustling market in the shadow of the four golden minarets of Baghdad's Kadhimiya Mosque held out little hope that the four-day campaign of air strikes would be the last of Iraq's showdowns with the West.

"We expect more strikes. They hate us, they want to colonize us again," said Dia, a goldsmith, referring to the years when Britain ruled Iraq after World War I.

Shoppers, some of them buying sweets for Ramadan, once again dismissed the impact of the strikes.

"These are just games with fire. They can come back for a third, fourth, fifth, sixth strike... Is the street closed?" asked one buying cigarettes and pointing to the busy road passing through the market. "We are not affected."

## Turkish premier-designate fails to form government

ANKARA (AP) — Pro-secular Premier-designate Bulent Ecevit yesterday officially returned his mandate to form a new government after failing to gather enough support in parliament.

"I asked to be excused from this mission as I have failed to gather enough support in parliament despite all my efforts," Ecevit told reporters after meeting with President Suleyman Demirel.

Refusing any alliance with the pro-Islamic Virtue Party — Turkey's largest party in parliament — Ecevit was unable to create a political alliance to secure a confidence vote from a highly divided legislature.

Longstanding animosities have split Turkey's center-left and the center-right for more than a decade.

Ecevit brushed aside an offer to join hands with a rival social democrat party leader, his longtime enemy, and his idea to form a minority government was shunned by the Virtue and most right-wing parties.

Ecevit was given the mandate three weeks ago after Mesut Yilmaz' left-right coalition government collapsed in a no-confidence

vote in parliament over allegations that he had ties with the mob and tampered with the sale of a state bank.

Ecevit leaves Demirel with a difficult task.

Demirel already broke with the long-standing tradition of appointing the leader of the largest party in parliament to form a government in order to bar the Virtue Party from power. His designation of Ecevit, whose party is the fourth largest in parliament, drew criticism even from some right-wing parties.

But the staunchly secular military opposes a return of the Islamic party to power. Turkey's first Islamic-led government established after the general elections in 1995 was pressured out of office by the military for not abiding the country's secular traditions.

Newspapers have suggested Demirel could designate a deputy who would receive support from most of the parties in parliament.

Demirel was scheduled to start a round of consultations with party leaders before coming up with a decision to find the person that will be acceptable to the parliament later in the day.

## Lockerbie remembers 10 years on

LOCKERBIE, Scotland (Reuters) — Lockerbie gathered bereaved relatives and friends to its bosom yesterday, 10 years after the bomb which blew Pan Am Flight 103 out of the skies and crashing on to this small Scottish town.

Some 50 foreign visitors joined local people in wreath-laying and a church service for the 270 people who lost their lives in one of the world's worst air disasters. Similar services were being held in London and the United States.

"My family's expanded at the expense of the death of my brother."

These people, the people of Pan Am 103, have become my family," said American Bert Ammerman, who lost his brother Tom.

"On the 10th anniversary this is where I wanted to be. It brings back the devastation, horror and destruction, but something positive has also come out of it."

Britain's Duke of Edinburgh, husband of Queen Elizabeth, laid a wreath at the Garden of Remembrance in Dryfedale Cemetery, just outside Lockerbie, where a simple, polished stone

memorial catalogs the dead.

A service was held a few hours later in Dryfedale church, coinciding with events at London's Westminster Abbey, Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia, and Syracuse University in New York state.

The 270 names were read out one by one in Westminster Abbey and a candle lit for each.

Prime Minister Tony Blair, his wife Cherie, and Foreign Secretary Robin Cook attended the service.

President Bill Clinton was expected to attend the Arlington service, underscoring the fact that 189 of the victims were American.

At 19:03 GMT — the time the plane disappeared from radar screens — the Lockerbie congregation observed a minute's silence, broken by a lone Scottish bagpiper playing the haunting traditional lament "Flowers of the Forest."

Outsiders have paid tribute to the support and compassion of the tight-knit Lockerbie community, which lost 11 people killed on the ground as wreckage and bodies showered down.



Former president Gerald Ford, shown in this 1997 file photo, and former president Jimmy Carter urged yesterday that the US Senate censure President Bill Clinton. (AP)

## Ex-presidents Ford, Carter urge Clinton censure

NEW YORK (Reuters) — Former US presidents Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter, saying impeachment is permanent and has brought "profound disgrace" to President Bill Clinton, urged the US Senate yesterday to censure him.

In an op-ed piece in *The New York Times*, Ford and Carter said a Senate resolution of censure should require that Clinton acknowledge he did not tell the truth under oath, but also should stipulate that such an admission could not be used against him in any future criminal prosecution.

A censure would allow Clinton to keep the job he has held for six years and would be a first step, according to the former chief executives, toward healing a "grievous and deepening" national wound.

On Saturday, Clinton became only the second president in US history, and the first in 130 years, to be impeached by the House of Representatives.

The matter is now before the Republican-controlled Senate, which could decide to try Clinton on the charges and remove him from office with a two-thirds majority vote to convict. The White House, with public opinion on its side at the moment, is preparing for a trial but also hoping that one can be avoided.

Carter, a Democrat, and Ford, a Republican, said the Senate has the flexibility in its rules and procedures to "end this national ordeal" without violating the rule of law or further damaging the presidency.

"However one now supposes a trial may end, it seems inevitable

that by rehabilitating the lurid evidence of President Clinton's misconduct, we will only exacerbate the jagged divisions that are tearing at our national fabric," they wrote.

"Can we find within ourselves the will, the vision, the generosity and, yes, the courage to resolve the present crisis in a way that makes Americans proud of their leaders, their institutions, and themselves? It is with this in mind that we personally favor a bipartisan resolution of censure."

Republican Sen. Orrin Hatch of Utah, speaking on NBC's *Meet the Press* on Sunday, appeared to welcome steps short of a trial, because it appears that with 45 Democrats in the 100-member Senate, the president has enough support to avoid conviction.

## First known surviving octuplets born

HOUSTON (AP) — Doctors knew the infant delivered two weeks ago was just one of several babies Nkem Chukwu carried in her womb. But none knew the girl was just one of a remarkable — and historic — eight.

Chukwu delivered her daughter's five sisters and two brothers Sunday to complete the first known surviving set of octuplets. They ranged from half a kilo to nearly 1 kilo, and all were in critical condition after birth.

"We're very hopeful all of the babies will survive, but they're critically ill newborns and we can't say for sure everything will be OK," said Dr. Patti Savrick, a pediatrician at Texas Children's Hospital.

The first girl was 12 weeks premature, and the others were 10 weeks early. The survival rate for babies born so young is 85 percent, doctors said.

The babies were whisked one by one to Texas Children's from the operating room at St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital. A team of about 30 medical personnel were involved in the 45-minute Caesarian section.

Seven of the babies were on ventilators yesterday to help them breathe, and all eight will likely remain hospitalized for two or three months.

Dr. Leonard Weisman, chief neonatal specialist at Texas Children's, said he will watch for lung and heart problems over the next few days. After that, metabolic problems and infections are a

'So many children,' Page 9

danger.

Chukwu, a Nigerian native who lives in Houston with her husband, Ike, was in stable condition Sunday night and could be out of the hospital by week's end. Her husband, a respiratory therapist, was not present for the deliveries and could not be reached for comment.

Chukwu had been taking fertility drugs. She conceived triplets last year but lost them midway through her pregnancy.

The couple has no other children.

Until the first child was born naturally on December 8, doctors were unsure how many fetuses Chukwu was carrying because her uterus was so crowded, said Dr. Brian Kirshon, a specialist in high-risk births and one of three doctors who delivered the babies.

Chukwu had been taking drugs to postpone labor, and Kirshon said giving birth to the first baby probably bought the other seven valuable time to mature. The lightest of the seven born Sunday might not have survived much longer in the womb, he said.

According to the *Guinness Book of Records*, the largest multiple birth was nine babies in Sydney, Australia, in 1971. All the children died.

Three other octuplet births have been recorded in the past 13 years, but in each of the births, some of the babies died.

In Iowa, Bobbi and Kenny McCaughy offered their congratulations amid holiday celebrations with their septuplets, born on November 19, 1997.

"We wish them the Lord's blessing and a merry Christmas," the couple said through their agent.

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## Reinventing politics

The elections embraced by the Knesset last night will likely prove unprecedented in Israel's history. Elements of what is being called a political "big bang" have occurred before. The true revolution ahead, however, is the possible clash between the politics of peace and security and a new, post-ideological political paradigm.

The speeches in the Knesset yesterday were, of course, opening shots in the coming election campaign. Judging from his speech, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu intends to make the election a rerun of the last: a referendum over which camp will better stand up for Israel's interests in the tough negotiations to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict.

In the last election, Netanyahu succeeded in convincing a majority that he and the Likud would better deliver what both sides were promising: peace with security. Since then, with final-status talks on the horizon, the stakes have only grown. The Labor Party, moreover, has played into Netanyahu's hands by refusing consistently to join him in calling on the Palestinians to fulfill their side of the Wye agreement.

Until the revolution wrought by Netanyahu, it should be remembered, the peace debate was split between those who favored territorial compromise and those who believed the Arab world would not make real peace, but only take advantage of Israeli concessions. That debate is now over: the argument is no longer over the principle of slicing the pie, only which party will negotiate a better and bigger piece for Israel.

The new third party that is gelling will, therefore, automatically join the territorial compromise-based "center" that both Labor and Likud already claim to represent. On the face of it, the expected leaders of the new party, MK Dan Meridor and former chief of General Staff Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, seem to hail from different parts of the old political spectrum - but given the collapse of that spectrum, they should have little trouble working together today.

The possible impact of the new party will not derive from its diplomatic centrism, which it will share with Labor and the Likud, but from the degree to which it has a serious agenda among the host of "post-ideological" issues craving for attention. There are the small matters of the economy, education, and the religious-secular conflict, for example.

Though Netanyahu pledges a computer for every child and Barak a job for every worker, these promises ring so hollow that they have become the political equivalent of background noise. The Netanyahu government has made brave strides toward fiscal responsibility, but has barely attempted the budget, tax, and regulatory reform that the economy needs. Barak, for his part, has given no indication of having developed any program in the economic arena, and sounds no different from his Labor predecessors. Similarly, Netanyahu and Barak have both paid lip service to repairing the religious-secular rift, but both seem to view the issue more as a cudgel against the other than a project of urgent national importance.

The opportunity and challenge confronting the as-yet-unborn Meridor-Shahak party is to breathe life into the vast agenda of issues that have languished in the shadow of the peace process, thereby revolutionizing Israeli politics. Whether this can be accomplished by a party starting from scratch, composed of quite disparate elements, is an open question.

The new party does, however, have at its disposal a model that worked for the Republican Party in the United States when it overthrew the 40-year reign of the Democrats in the House of Representatives in 1994. The Republicans adopted what they called a "Contract with America" - a set of commitments to enact specific legislative initiatives if given the opportunity by the voters. Though most Americans probably could not name many of the initiatives in the Republican "contract," the effort succeeded in convincing many that here were politicians who were willing to go beyond vague campaign promises and hold themselves to a verifiable record of accomplishment.

Israeli politics is ripe for such an injection of accountability. There is nothing stopping either Labor or the Likud from taking such an approach, but a new party has the advantage of not having previously disappointed the voters. The leaders of the new party may be tempted to follow the more well trod road of pledging allegiance to vague, popular objectives - such as improving religious-secular relations - without any concrete plan to accomplish them. If the new party chooses this path, it will likely and deservedly meet the fate of its tired political competitors, and quickly lose the support of the voter.

## Pass it

EVELYN GORDON

The latest hot idea in the Knesset is an interim budget. By the end of last week, most MKs were convinced that elections are on the horizon. And with new elections a virtual certainty, the argument went, it would be unfair to pass a "lame duck" budget for 1999 that would tie the next government's hands.

At first glance, this seems like a generous and appropriate gesture.

It is for this reason that Yitzhak Rabin, elected in the summer of 1992, made only the most minor changes in that year's budget, while Netanyahu, elected in May 1996, made only minor changes in the 1996 budget. Both realized they lacked time to draft and pass two full budgets, so they preferred to concentrate on the coming year.

Under the interim budget proposal, however, the next government would have no choice: It would somehow have to simultaneously pass a budget for both 1999 and 2000.

### The annual budget, that is. An interim budget just to get us to the elections would be an economic disaster

The budget is the government's primary tool for accomplishing its goals, so leaving a new government with a full budget would in many ways prevent it from ruling effectively for its first year in office.

Yet in reality, an interim budget is not only unnecessary, but would be a disaster for the economy.

To start with, the idea that it is unfair to stick an incoming government with a lame duck budget is ridiculous. Any incoming government - even if elections are held at their normal time - always has to make do with its predecessor's budget for the first year, because there is no time for it to draft and pass a budget of its own. Were elections held on their regularly scheduled November date, for instance, this would leave the new prime minister with less than two months to put together a coalition, draft a budget, and get it through the cabinet and three readings in the Knesset. This is an impossibly tight schedule.

The same is true of mid-year elections - which is the most likely scenario for the coming year. By fall, the new government must have submitted its budget for the following year. Where will it find the time between, say, a May election day and Rosh Hashana to draft a budget for the current year as well, and get it through three readings in the Knesset - which is in recess throughout the summer?

The FACT that an interim budget would leave the new government with a logistical nightmare, however, is only the first of the problems this idea creates. Another problem is that such a procedure would ensure an even greater-than-usual diversion of precious resources from productive to non-productive ends.

This is because no budget makes it through the Knesset without every party exacting its cut as the price of passage. An interim budget will give all the parties a chance to double their pickings - they will be able to collect one round of handouts in exchange for passing the interim budget, and another round in exchange for passing the "real" budget.

The result will be less money to devote to such crucial economic goals, such as investment in infrastructure.

The most serious problem, however, is the economic uncertainty that would be generated by such a procedure.

A budget is not only the government's work plan for the year. It is also used by businesses. They look at that year's schedule of taxes, subsidies and slated reforms, and plan their own work schedules for the year accordingly.

Without knowing what the government has in mind in these areas, most businesses will be reluctant to invest in anything new, for fear that an unexpected tax or reform plan would turn the new investment into a liability. And an economy mired in a slowdown cannot afford a business community that is reluctant to invest.

Nor is it just local businesses that are affected. Foreign investors also use the government budget as a key tool in deciding whether to put their money here. Planned reforms, deficit and inflation targets, taxes - all these are crucial in assessing what the economy is likely to look like in the coming year, and therefore, whether it is worthwhile to invest.

## Dry Bones



With no budget as a clue, most foreign investors will prefer to wait for a year and see how things shape up. The result, once again, will be a deepening of the economic slowdown, as well as a falling stock market, since foreign investors have been the main force driving the market for the past year.

The real reason MKs are so fond of the interim budget idea is that they do not want responsibility for the tough measures included in the 1999 budget proposal - especially just prior to an election. And though this proposal is not as terrible as it is often painted, it is true that it could be improved.

But at this point, whether or not it is the best budget possible is irrelevant. The grim truth is that any budget is better than no budget at all.

## The importance of independence

TEDDY KOLLEK

When I first ran for mayor of Jerusalem at the behest of David Ben-Gurion, I didn't expect our list to win, but we did. Still, the list I headed captured only 5 of the 21 council seats, which meant that I had to look for support from other parties.

Yitzhak Navon tried to help me, by putting together a potential coalition with Agudat Yisrael and Hashomer Hatza'ir. You see, there was an unwritten rule among the coalition builders of those days: "No Revisionists and no Communists."

I did not accept it.

To me, the Revisionists (Herut), and Hashomer Hatza'ir were not possible partners in a national government. But on the local level I saw no reason for such preclusions. I informed Ben-Gurion that I wanted to broaden my administration and received his support. We formed a coalition with both Agudat Yisrael and Herut. It was the first time Herut had been included in any coalition in Israel.

Running on an independent list, I was re-elected 4 times, and served as mayor for 28 years.

Sometimes, being above politics is the only way to get things done. It has certainly been a major consideration in the running of the Jerusalem Foundation.

Early during my first term as mayor, I was visited by some American friends who asked me whether I was aware of how poor Jerusalem was. They pointed out that it would be virtually impossible to finance new projects, such as research or building programs, out of the city's regular operating budget, and strongly advised me to set up a separate foundation to raise funds for such projects.

That's how the Jerusalem Foundation was born. It soon developed into a substantial organization that over the years has assumed responsibility for a tremendous number of local projects.

One of the foundation's most important achievements has been to make the city green. There were no trees in public places before the foundation started its activities; no playgrounds, no parks. Over the years, 350 playgrounds and parks were built by the Jerusalem Foundation in cooperation with the municipality, which also took on the responsibility for their upkeep.

New institutions were created. One project the Foundation is particularly proud of is the Sheikh Jarrah Medical Clinic, staffed by Arab doctors and nurses and catering mainly to Jerusalem's Arab population.

The clinic is run by a health fund, which counts 107,000 of Jerusalem's 170,000 Arabs among its members. I believe that someone who had been treated in this clinic in the morning would be highly unlikely to go out in the afternoon and throw stones at Israelis.

In addition to local projects, there are those that benefit the entire population of Jerusalem: the soccer stadium, the Bloomfield Science Museum, and the enormously popular Tisch Family Biblical Zoo, which draws over half a million visitors each year.

ONE OF the reasons the foundation has been able to attract donors is that it links them with specific projects. As a result, the contributors know exactly where their money is going and can identify with the project.

Another reason, though, is that the foundation is known to be apolitical. At the start, we had decided that it should be completely separate from the municipality or any other political body and refrained, therefore, from employing city officials.

The foundation has always adhered to its self-imposed rules of choosing its employees according to their qualifications, regardless of their party affiliation. And indeed, the projects have been apolitical.

With the management of the foundation having been in the very capable hands of Mrs. Ruth Cheslin and an excellent staff almost from its inception, my own role - in accordance with the strict separation of the foundation and municipality administrations - has been of a nominal nature, mainly concerned with fund-raising.

The same honorary position, that of chairman, was offered to my successor at City Hall, but was rejected by him.

The reason why the Jerusalem Foundation could not accept Mayor Ehud Olmert's demand to be made the controlling executive was its concern that the foundation might lose its independence, and its activities would be determined by the same political forces, bureaucracy and red tape that inevitably dominate the city council.

When we created the Jerusalem Foundation, our dream was to make this city a place where all its residents would live in harmony and prosperity. We did not want politics to prevent cultural and public welfare projects from seeing the light of day.

### The Jerusalem Foundation has been so successful because it has remained apolitical

## Going on vacation

WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY, JR.

"Well, we just can't say, can't predict, at this point," was the answer by week's end. Livingston had announced he was resigning the post he'd never quite held.

This on vacation eve.

Then there was the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. His job last Thursday was to suggest that Wednesday was an opportune day to begin the attack on Iraq, quite apart from any political developments in the House of Representatives.

The general was most eager to show the fruits of the American assault, so he came out with a picture of a barracks compound.

"Here," he said pointing to a photograph of the compound, "is how it looked before. Here," he moved the pointer to the parallel picture below, "is how it looks now." The buildings were gutted.

Were there generals and admirals in there, gone to their reward? One journalist asked. The general did not know, could not answer that.

What was established was that when missiles land, they do a given amount of damage to what they land on, which is good news inasmuch as the missiles cost \$1 million each, and we fired off 200 of them, just on Wednesday.

"Affect the debate?" he was asked? How?

On that same day there was much fury expressed by groups of citizens who protested what they saw as the imminent impeachment of their president.

Judiciary Committee Chairman Henry Hyde had offhandedly asked a questioner. Had he ever been to Auschwitz? He went on to say that that is the kind of thing that happens if you neglect the rule of law. That line of expression ("slippery slope") is very common to lawyers, and one hears it every day, as when the ACLU warns that if you permit a prayer to be said in a public school, the next thing you will have is not Auschwitz, necessarily, but an Established Religion.

The remark was bitterly protested by Elie Wiesel, who does not like to hear the word Auschwitz used to illustrate anything other than... Auschwitz.

BUT on the protest front, tempers are frayed, and projections are alarmed, if not exactly alarming. Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz, who protests everything on Earth except the guilt of most of his clients, advised everyone that a vote against impeachment was a vote against bigotry.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### DON'T FEAR WORLD OPINION

Sir, - Words cannot express our revulsion at hearing President Bill Clinton's comparison of the children of terrorists to those of terrorist victims. Clinton and Yasser Arafat have much in common: neither seems to be held accountable for his actions.

Even in light of impeachment proceedings, 75% of Americans, fully acknowledging his misdeeds, want Clinton to remain in office.

We all know how much heartbreak and tragedy lie at Arafat's feet, but no matter, he seems to receive the world's embrace.

Only Israel continues to be the

receiving end of contempt, no matter how hard we strive to please. Despite painful territorial concessions, America and the Arabs feel and are free to continue breaking their promises. We will never have the world's affection, but once we had her admiration and respect.

Only our sustained commitment to strength in word and deed - without fearing world opinion - can lead to true peace in the turbulent Middle East.

SHOSHANA WEINSTEIN  
Kfar Adumim.

### AN ISRAELI ABROAD

Sir, - I recently overheard the Geshet Theater Group being interviewed on the radio and one of the actors complained about the fact that they are always called Russians.

Well, before I made aliya in 1963 from South Africa, I was known as a Jewess. Here in Israel, I became Anglo-Saxon and the only time I am called an "Israeli" is when I go abroad.

JILL SADOWSKY  
Jerusalem.

### MISLEADING CAPTION

Sir, - The front-page photograph of December 15 was not only misleading, but constituted a blatant falsehood and insult to the intelligence of your readership.

The caption read: "PNC members vote unanimously in Gaza to annul articles of the Palestinian Covenant calling for Israel's destruction."

Firstly, in this contrived and orchestrated show of support for Yasser Arafat, only some of the participants were members of the Palestine National Council.

ELAINE SHLOMOVI  
Jerusalem.

Secondly, there was a show of hands, but no systematic name-by-name tallied vote. Finally, in that there was no tallied vote, the word "unanimous" is ridiculous.

Your caption reflects a mentality of denial of the precarious situation of Eretz Yisrael and the intentions of those who are still our sworn enemies.

ELAINE SHLOMOVI  
Jerusalem.

### INSULT TO HEROES

Sir, - Hillel Kuttler, in "Arrival of the peacemaker" (December 11), writes: "This time the crisis centers over... the Palestinian riots to protest Jerusalem's failure to release political prisoners."

Calling terrorists "political prisoners" is an insult to Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Nelson Mandela, Vaclav Havel, Aung San Suu Kyi or Andrei Sakharov, who never blew up buses full of civilians, or even advocated doing so.

MLADEN ANDRIJASEVIC  
Beersheba.

### SHIRKING SERVICE

Sir, - In a facile attempt to justify his son's lack of national service, Jonathan Rosenblum, in "Confessions of a haredi dad" (December 11), uses the sophistry familiar to layers arguing a hopeless case.

Haredi parents, according to Rosenblum, rightfully keep their boys home because the army is

filled with those who hate haredim.

His logic conveniently skirts the core issue: It is precisely because they shirk national service that haredim engender such feelings.

AVROM JACOBS  
Kochav Ya'ir.

### ONLY WAY

Sir, - The only way to get out of Lebanon is to go into Syria.

MOSHE BRODETSKY  
Jerusalem.

## FROM OUR ARCHIVES

65 years ago: On December 22, 1933, The Palestine Post reported on the commencement of a new, combined rail and bus service between Jerusalem and Haifa taking three and a half hours, instead of five and half as previously by train alone.

50 years ago: On December 22, 1948, The Palestine Post reported that the Arabs had refused to permit the opening of a direct road from Jerusalem to Bethlehem for the Christmas pilgrimage, despite the ruling of the Consular Truce.

Commission which reiterated the principle of a free access to all Holy Places. The pilgrims had to use an alternative route: a mud track twice as long as the traditional road.

Alexander Zvielli

سكزا من الاصل



# 'So many children she didn't know what to do'

The first time Paula Robinson learned she was pregnant with triplets, she took a deep breath and counted her blessings. She had begun to think she might never have children. Now, after her first dose of clomiphene, a fertility drug, she was getting an instant family.

"As long as they were okay, that's all I cared about," the Pasadena, Md., woman said recently, thinking back to that overwhelming day in 1984.

She was not so sanguine the second time. Newly remarried, Robinson was getting a sonogram two years ago when she heard her doctor again counting to three.

"I sat right up and said, 'There's not!'," recalled Robinson, who this time had undergone in-vitro fertilization (IVF). "I figured if anything maybe twins, but never in a million years did I think triplets. It was like a déjà-vu thing again."

So it was that Nicole, Jordan and Joshua last year joined Jamie, Michelle, Michael and Paula's husband, Jeff, to round out the Robinson family at eight.

Robinson is rare in having given birth to two sets of triplets; only four other American moms can make the same claim, according to the Triplet Connection, a Stockton, Calif., group that tracks multiple births. But she is not at all unusual in having given birth to multiples as a result of undergoing fertility treatments.

Those treatments still fail most of the time. But when they work, they often work too well. Case in point — the extraordinary birth of eight babies to a 27-year-old woman in Houston, Texas on Sunday.

The multiple birth rate among women getting IVF is 18 times that of the general population, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.

Triplets, quadruplets and higher-order multiples are a handful, of course, but the problem goes far beyond the mountains of diapers, the sleepless nights and the crushing food bills.

TRIPLETS suffer 12 times the infant-mortality rate associated with singleton births and are born on average about six weeks early, putting them at greatly increased risk of neurological defects, eye and lung disorders, and developmental and behavioral abnormalities.

"I personally don't consider triplets to be a success," said David Frankfurter, a fertility doctor at Women & Infants Hospital of Rhode Island in Providence.

Quadruplets fare even worse than triplets, and studies indicate that parents of these struggling four-somes are almost always clinically depressed by the end of the first year.

Yet by threes, fours, fives, sixes and sevens, the multiples keep coming. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, the incidence of multiple births in the US has risen sixfold in the past 2 1/2 decades, with 1996 the latest year for which figures are avail-

With multiple births skyrocketing — like the octuplets born in Texas this week — fertility specialists are exploring ways to ensure that patients go home with one or two babies at most. Rick Weiss reports



Dr. Brian Kirshon, who delivered the first known surviving set of octuplets this week, and pediatrician Patti Savrick. (AP)

able) showing the highest increase ever. Experts agree that the nationwide trend is almost entirely traceable to fertility clinics, which intentionally err on the side of overproduction to ensure a high success rate.

Now, alarmed and embarrassed by those skyrocketing numbers, reproductive specialists are exploring novel ways to ensure that patients go home with babies, but just one or two.

"Multiple gestations are now the most common complication of assisted reproductive technology, and probably the most controversial," said William B. Schoolcraft of the Colorado Center for Reproductive Medicine in Englewood, one of several specialists to address the issue at the recent annual meeting of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine in San Francisco.

MULTIPLE births are haunting the practice of assisted reproductive technology at a critical time in its history. Sophisticated methods of manipulating eggs and sperm now allow doctors to help an unprecedented portion of America's six million infertile individuals. At the same time, public attention on the industry's shortcomings — inflated success rates and high costs — has tarnished the field and catapulted it to the brink of regulation.

At their meeting, many fertility specialists expressed the sentiment that if their profession doesn't move soon to stem the tide of mul-

tiples, legislators, health-care managers or insurers will impose restrictions.

Many insurance companies are already hesitant to cover fertility treatments, and the epidemic of multiple births is one reason. At about \$10,000 per effort, the cost of in-vitro fertilization is not overwhelming for insurance companies. But the long-term medical costs of caring for even a single brain-damaged triplet can run millions of dollars.

Patients are partially responsible for the problem. Fertility treatments are difficult and expensive, so many women getting IVF — in which embryos are grown in laboratory dishes and then transferred to a woman's uterus — insist upon having four, five or more embryos transferred to increase the odds that at least one or two will survive. Too often, a greater-than-expected number of them become babies.

A similar problem arises in women who take ovary-stimulating drugs such as clomiphene, which helps them make extra eggs for fertilization through intercourse or artificial insemination. Often these women's ovaries get overstimulated and produce 10 or more eggs.

In those cases, the risk of multiples is so great that the best option, according to many doctors, is to cancel the effort and try again another month.

But as happened with the mother of the famous Iowa septuplets and with the Texas woman who took two hormone-based fertility

drugs to produce more eggs, many women choose to go ahead anyway.

Doctors are also to blame, experts said, because they want their success rates to remain competitive.

A cautious doctor who places only two IVF embryos in a woman's womb or counsels a woman to cancel a cycle because of ovarian overstimulation risks coming up empty-handed.

All this has prompted fertility researchers to focus on various strategies for reducing the incidence of multiple births.

AT the heart of the IVF multiple-birth problem is an unsolved mystery: Of the dozen or more embryos that a couple may produce as a result of mixing their eggs and sperm in a laboratory dish, which ones are most likely to thrive?

Under current practices, these early embryos are typically transferred to a woman's uterus after two or three days in a culture dish, when each consists of about eight cells. That's a couple of days before the five-day mark, when an embryo is naturally ready to burrow into the uterine lining and grow. But until recently, embryos have generally not done well in lab dishes much beyond three days.

Doctors try their best to choose the few best embryos for transfer to the womb, said Rene Fernandez Pelegrina, director of the Centro de Fertilidad del Caribe in Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico.

"Not all embryos produced are going to be normal," Pelegrina said. "Our job is to select the best ones."

Unfortunately, although a substantial number of them are doomed to fail, most 3-day-old embryos look about the same. So doctors are driven to hedge their bets and transfer four, five or even more.

That's what happened to Robinson the second time. After having her fallopian tubes tied to prevent further pregnancies after the birth of her first triplets and her subsequent divorce, she surprised herself by falling in love again and marrying a man who had never had children.

Her sterilization surgery, it turned out, was irreversible, so she turned to IVF and opted to have four embryos transferred — a reasonable number, she thought, to ensure becoming pregnant with a baby or two.

The rest is reproductive history. And while all six children are now healthy, their ordeals as infants are a reminder of the difficulties faced by all multiples.

By the fourth month of her first pregnancy, Robinson's doctors told her to stop working and stay in bed full time to prevent premature labor. At month five, she went into labor anyway. Doctors interrupted the labor and forestalled delivery, but for just two months.

Jamie and Michelle were born at about 4 1/2 pounds each and got out of the hospital three weeks later; Michael weighed in at one



Paula Robinson, with husband Jeff and her two sets of triplets: One can count too many blessings. (Washington Post)

pound thirteen ounces and spent his first two months in intensive care.

During her second pregnancy, Robinson had to give herself daily shots for four months to prevent premature delivery. Even so, the triplets were born about seven weeks early, the heaviest weighing 3 1/2 pounds.

"Josh was touch-and-go," Robinson recalls. "His lungs were undeveloped, and he was on a res-

pirator for a couple of months. It's been a huge financial crunch."

Dr. Alan DeCherney, chairman of obstetrics and gynecology at the University of California, Los Angeles and editor in chief of the journal *Fertility and Sterility*, estimated that caring for the eight premature Texas babies would cost half a million dollars from delivery until the time they went home.

RECENT advances stand to make such complications much less

common. Most important has been the development of special nutrient broths that allow technicians to keep embryos alive in the laboratory for a full five days.

During those extra two days, microscopic eight-cell embryos grow into so-called blastocysts, consisting of 150 to 350 cells. That's a big and complicated enough mass of cells for a specialist to tell which ones are most likely to

without compromising overall pregnancy rates. In a study led by Schoolcraft, for example, a transfer of just three blastocysts to a woman's womb was as likely to result in a pregnancy as a transfer of four

earlier-stage embryos. At Stanford, doctors have recently become so confident in their ability to identify the most robust blastocysts that they now typically transfer just two to the womb, making it virtually impossible to get triplets and often giving women a single, healthy baby.

See CHILDREN, Page 10

**'Josh was touch-and-go. His lungs were undeveloped, and he was on a respirator for a couple of months. It's been a huge financial crunch'**

— Paula Robinson, mother of two sets of triplets

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## I'm feeling caught in the middle

**Dear Ruthie,**  
About two years ago, my best friend had a terrible falling out with her employer, a woman she and I had been very friendly with while she was working at her last job. Out of loyalty to my friend, I stopped seeing this woman socially, though we had never had any actual fight. Since then, much has happened in all our lives: Each of us has moved to a different city; each of us has found another job; and two of us have gotten divorced.

Recently, my friend went into therapy which, she says, has helped her "see the light." I couldn't be happier for her. She and I have both gone through a very rough period in our lives, and have been searching for some degree of inner peace.

My problem is this: About three weeks ago, my friend decided it was time to bury the hatchet with this other woman. We discussed how the "falling out" had happened, and in what way my friend was just as responsible for the rift as the other woman. Then she made the fateful phone call, and the two of them decided to meet.

During their heart-to-heart talk, they agreed not to let silly things get in the way of their friendship anymore, and they also spoke of my part in the whole business.

The next day, this woman phoned me and we had a wonderful talk, at the end of which she asked if I could come to visit her for the weekend. I agreed.

But when I told this to my friend, she responded coldly. I got the distinct feeling that she felt I was "moving in" on her new-old friendship.

Quickly, I made an excuse about not being able to visit this woman for the weekend. Now she is behaving coldly toward me.

Although I was instrumental in helping the two women patch things up, I feel they are now both angry at me. I don't know what to do.

**Caught in the Middle of the Crossfire**  
Somewhere in Israel

Dear Caught in the Middle:  
It sounds as though your friend

**Dear Ruthie**



Ruthie Blum

has a deep-seated need to be angry with someone she is close to. Her relations with people seem to be characterized by cycles of entanglement and estrangement. These cycles undoubtedly coincide with any internal ups and downs she is experiencing.

In other words, they have less to do with what she is feeling toward others at any given moment and more to do with what she is feeling toward herself. It is no wonder, then, that she has been "searching for some degree of inner peace."

The question here, however, is not what you should do about your friend, any more than it is about whether you should resume your contact with the other woman. What you really need to ask yourself is how you are involved in the triangle, and why you feel "caught in the middle."

From what you describe, your role has been one of appeasement in relation to your best friend. When she had a falling-out with this other woman, you followed suit - in spite of having no specific gripe in relation to her. You refer to this appeasement as "loyalty," but if you take a look at the pattern that characterizes your relationship with this friend, you might discover that "loyalty" is a euphemism for fear of wrath.

Indeed, as soon as you sensed coldness in her most recent response, you immediately canceled your scheduled date with the other woman. Now you're feeling betrayed since both of them are angry at you, when all you have tried to do is remain in their good graces.

When you can understand that there is no such thing as being "caught" in the middle - only fear of arousing ire on one side or another - you will be able to make your own decisions about your social life. As someone who, like your friend, is on a quest for inner peace, this would be a great place to start.

**Letters should be addressed to: 'Dear Ruthie,' POB 81, Jerusalem 91000. For e-mail: ruthie@jpost.co.il ('Dear Ruthie' also appears in In Jerusalem and in City Lights on Fridays.)**

## Yos-yos have had their ups and downs, but the makers of X-Brain, Cold Fusion, Fireball and their ilk are definitely on a roll, Elizabeth Large writes

One of the hardest toys to find these days is the X-Brain. That's a Yomga X-Brain. As in yo-yo. You know, two discs and an axle that go up and down on a string.

But the scarcity of the X-Brain is only the most obvious sign of what may be the biggest yo-yo craze since the late 1920s, when the toy was first marketed in the United States.

During the '90s, yo-yo sales have been averaging around 10 million a year, but industry analysts are talking about sales of 100 million for 1998.

"They're selling incredibly," said Jeri Thorton, manager of the F.A.O. Schwarz store in Towson, Md. "Every other customer who comes in wants to know if we have yo-yos." Twelve-year-old Chris Pund, who owns 10 or 11 models, said he got back into yo-yoing this summer because his friends all had them.

He finds the new yo-yos like his Yomga Fireball a big improvement on the one he had when he was younger. "It stays down longer," Chris said.

But the rebirth of the yo-yo isn't just a toy story; it's an example of American marketing at its finest.

You have a low-tech toy like a wooden or plastic yo-yo that every parent in America would approve of. Now you have to sell it to the kids.

So you add some high-tech features like Yomga's "patented clutch system," which brings the yo-yo back automatically, or metal ball bearings and other mechanisms that increase sleep time. (When you throw the yo-yo down and let it spin until it dies, that's its sleep time.) If there's more sleep time, the yo-yo has more time to do tricks - which is, after all, the whole fun of owning a yo-yo.

Suddenly that classic toy has become a high-performance machine.

Just as important, you give your yo-yos names like Brain and X-Brain, Fireball, Silver Bullet, ProYo II and Turbo Bumblebee. You add wild colors or fashion your yo-yos out of see-through plastic. You manufacture models that glow in the dark, strobe, change colors or make sounds.

You have a Web site, of course. Yo-yo Web sites get as many as half a million hits a month from as far away as Vietnam.

Then you start competitions, how-to classes in retail stores and even exclusive clubs like Team Yomga. (You can't be a member until you've taken the classes and mastered 37 tricks.) "It's no longer a toy."

Yomga's Jane Howes said, "Yo-yoing is becoming a sport, an extreme sport like snowboarding or roller-blading." Those in the know call it yoying.

And if you really want to start a craze, you launch your first national TV campaign (as Yomga did this fall), or hire a public relations firm (as Playmaxx did this year for the first time).

But if the craze is going to take off, as this one has, you have to count on a little luck.

"For boys there's not a new hot toy this year," David Barber, of Playmaxx, said. "That helps yo-yos."

Yo-yo manufacturers better not count their chickens. Seven-year-old Dillon Waitkus said he asked for a yo-yo after seeing one of Yomga's commercials. "My granddad showed me how to use it," Dillon said.

But even though his yo-yo is his favorite toy right now, he has asked for a PlayStation. "Then it'll be my favorite toy," Dillon actually owns not one but two Yomgas, a Brain and a Fireball.



A classic toy has become a high-performance machine, with one model selling for as much as \$150. (El Habibi)

## Yo-yos go back a long way

What look like yo-yos have turned up in ancient Greek vases.

In the late 18th century, the toy resurfaced in Europe. The English called the yo-yo a bandalore or "incroyable" (from the French word for "incredible"). It was a favorite with George IV.

The French aristocracy got in on the craze, too. The yo-yo came to be known as "l'émigré," perhaps because it "emigrated" from England or perhaps because so many of the yo-yoing rich were forced to emigrate during the Reign of Terror.

The toy came to the US from the Philippines, where it was enormously popular. ("Yo-yo" is said to mean "come come" in Tagalog, the native Philippine language.)

Filipino Pedro Flores is believed to have developed the modern yo-yo, with an axle so the toy could "sleep" - and millions of kids could walk the Dog and Rock the Baby.

In the 1920s, entrepreneur Donald Duncan bought Flores' company and registered the name with the US Patent Office. His slogan was, "If it's not a Duncan, it's not a yo-yo."

Until the '60s, other companies had to call them "return tops" or use the word illegally.

(The Baltimore Sun)

But yo-yos have also become collectors' items; and because they are reasonably priced com-

pared to a lot of collectibles (many of the most popular ones cost from \$4 to \$12), youngsters

can afford to collect as many as 20 or 30 different models.

Of course, not every yo-yo is reasonably priced. Playmaxx's new Cold Fusion sells for \$150. It makes Yomga's Metallic Missile look like a bargain at \$115.

Remember, that's two discs, an axle and some string. Yes, string: 100 percent cotton is still the best.

OK, Cold Fusion's discs are high-strength aluminum, and the axle is a ball-bearing axle. At a national competition this year, the Cold Fusion set a new record for sleeping, 7 minutes and 8 seconds. (The world record for a traditional yo-yo sleep time was 53 seconds.)

But still, \$150. Who's buying this yo-yo? Not just the professional yo-yoists and collectors you'd expect, Barber said. Some are being sold to parents.

"For some kids, it's the one thing they want," he said.

Yo-yo enthusiasts - with many exceptions, including the 1998 world champion, 18-year-old Jennifer Baybrook - are boys. Specifically, boys ages 7 to 14 or 15.

Since the '20s, there have been yo-yo booms and busts, but analysts seem to agree that none has been as dramatic as the current one.

Some link the up-and-down popularity of the yo-yo with the narrow window of opportunity for getting a boy hooked. The toy gets hot again when a new group of boys discovers it, said Chris Byrne, editor of *Playthings MarketWatch*, a trade publication. "The yo-yo is an evergreen."

It's a theory, anyway.

Stuart Crump Jr., editor of the newsletter *Yo-Yo Times*, said, "There seems to be a seven-year cycle."

Manufacturers, meanwhile, have tried to up their sales to females, without much success. "We made them in girl-type colors like pink, but they just didn't sell," Barber said.

So in schoolyards all over America, it's mostly boys who are doing the Brain Twister with somersaults and a Skin the Cat dismount, the Man on the Trapeze with an upward toss dismount - even the Atom Smasher.

"It's like the chicken pox," Howes said. "One child has it, and then they all do." (The Baltimore Sun)

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## CHILDREN

Continued from Page 9

That's what happened in October, when 40-year-old Holly Rodriguez of Pleasanton, Calif., gave birth to daughter Lauren. Rodriguez and her husband, 38-year-old Terry Stover, had produced nine embryos at a Bay Area fertility clinic in February when their doctor told them about the blastocyst option. They went for it.

"Our perspective was, we'd rather have less embryos put in and a higher implantation rate," Rodriguez said. "We also didn't want to have to deal with the idea of selective reduction," she said, in which doctors abort one or more fetuses in a multiple gestation. "And we did not want a 'litter' at this stage in our lives. Looking at the health issues, it just did not make sense."

It was frightening, Rodriguez said, to learn each day that another couple of their embryos had succumbed in the lab - embryos that could have been placed in her uterus starting on day three. But they waited. Finally, on day five, her doctor selected the two healthiest-looking blastocysts and transferred them to her womb. (Another one, which Rodriguez calls "our freezer baby," has been frozen for possible use later.) The more tenacious of those two became Lauren.

HOW do doctors select the most promising blastocysts? Much of the art is essentially esthetic - a matter of seeing which ones have the plumpest cells and the fewest ruffles that may be the signs of faltering embryonic development.

Increasingly, however, doctors are also using genetic tests. Unlike early eight-celled embryos, which need practically every cell they've got if they are to survive, blastocysts have plenty of extra cells to spare for testing. Geneticists can remove 10 or 12 representative cells from these masses and conduct various tests.

Researchers at the reproductive specialists' meeting in October described several new tests they'd devised, each of which can be conducted on a single cell removed from a blastocyst.

These tests are not looking for inherited diseases (although many such tests exist and are available to families with a history of those diseases). Rather, they detect genes that are associated with faster or better embryo growth or, in one fascinating example, a gene that helps embryos cling more securely to the uterine lining - in effect, an anti-miscarriage gene.

With many of these research tests now poised to get their debuts in fertility clinics, and with blastocyst techniques already lowering the odds of producing multiple births, some experts have begun to argue that old-fashioned 3-day-old embryo transfers should become a thing of the past.

"Blastocyst transfers should not be the exception, but should be the rule in IVF programs," a French team concluded at the meeting.

But not everyone is convinced. Some researchers question the wisdom of keeping embryos in a laboratory dish for a full five days, reasoning that the womb is the place where these cells are most likely to develop normally. That fear is mostly theoretical; no one has shown that embryos suffer genetic damage as a result of being cultured for an extra few days.

But a few teams have made the surprising observation that laboratory-reared blastocysts seem especially prone to splitting in half once they are in the womb, where

**'We did not want a "litter" at this stage in our lives. It just did not make sense'**

- Holly Rodriguez, mother of Lauren

they develop into identical twins - an ironic complication for a method intended to reduce the occurrence of multiple births.

At least three centers have spotted such a trend. In one study led by Ellen Rijnders, an IVF specialist at the Reinier de Graaf Groep in Voorburg, Holland, embryos transferred to the womb at the blastocyst stage gave rise to identical (monozygotic) twins 45 times more often than did embryos transferred at the two- or three-day stage.

"Monozygotic twins are not something to be happy about, because of the medical consequences," Rijnders said. Identical twins are twice as likely to die within the first few days after birth as are nonidentical twins, for example. And nonidentical twins themselves are already twice as likely to die during that period as are singleton babies - facts that leave Rijnders questioning the rush to blastocyst culture.

"Blastocyst transfer is becoming more and more popular," she said,

"but it's still a new technique."

Others have expressed concern that the growing use of genetic tests to identify and select those blastocysts deemed "most likely to succeed" can amount to a form of molecular eugenics. Nobody knows whether the traits that give these embryos a competitive edge during the first five days of life are linked to other traits - positive or negative - that will emerge in childhood or adulthood, such that a certain kind of person is being inadvertently selected while another kind is being discriminated against.

For a growing number of fertility specialists, however, such concerns are outweighed by the immediacy of the multiple-birth epidemic - and the fear that if blastocyst transfer or some other technique does not put the brakes on that spiraling trend, then someone else is going to foist restrictive policies on the medical specialty.

Already several European countries have passed regulations restricting to three the number of embryos that fertility doctors can place in women's wombs. In Australia, a recently passed law limits doctors to transferring only two.

In the United States, where doctors have traditionally enjoyed more autonomy over the way they practice medicine, no such restrictions exist. Indeed, they have been resisted by practitioners, in part because of an acute awareness that if such limits were put in place, take-home baby rates would quickly fall.

But pressure is building for doctors to show some restraint. In January, the American Society for Reproductive Medicine released its first "practice guidelines" with recommendations on how many embryos ought to be transferred to the womb. The society wants to use voluntary guidelines as a way of reining doctors and patients in.

Lately there has even been some talk within the organization of making those guidelines less voluntary, although how such rules would be enforced remains unclear.

Given the highly competitive nature of the fertility business, where prospective patients now scan Web sites and federally gathered statistics to see which clinics have the highest success rates, any policy that has a negative impact on pregnancy rates is sure to draw doctors' ire. But one way or another, said fertility specialist Pellegrina, doctors are going to have to face the fact that the era of medically induced multiple births must come to an end.

"There has to be a movement," he said. "We must change our ways." (The Washington Post)

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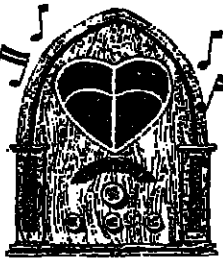


# Seal's soulful class

Seal remains an enigma on the pop scene. Every three years or so, the hunk with the scarred face emerges from oblivion with another moving touch of soulful class. *Human Being* is no exception, with much of the material rising to new melodic heights only hinted at on his two previous discs.

The title track and opening single, with its riveting bass line and explosive chorus, is such a powerful and ready-made classic that it's

## In Tune



By David Brinn

- HUMAN BEING  
Seal  
(Red Ants)
- AQUARIUM  
Aqua  
(Red Ants)
- ONE WISH  
Deborah Cox  
(Red Ants)
- THIS WAY  
Total Touch  
(NMC)
- EDYTA GORNIAK  
Edyta Gorziak  
(NMC)

repeated at the end of the disc, providing an emotional bookend. Seal easily slips in and out of sophisticated soul, acoustic tunes and modern production, unifying it all with his intense but not overwrought delivery. George Michael and Michael Bolton could only dream of possessing the unforced vulnerability and compassion that Seal brings to make otherwise ordinary pop sound like a convincing appeal from the heart. With typically lush, complex production from British hitmaker Trevor Horn, Seal's velvety voice never sounded more alive. Although the disc loses steam in the middle with a series of overly placid ballads, *Human Being* is still a welcome visit by the gifted brother from another planet.

Oh, Lord! What a youngster's stocking could be complete without a Limited Christmas Edition of Aqua's *Aquarium*? Candy-coated "greatest hit" like "Barbie Girl" and 10 other pre-teen pop sound-alikes are matched with five pointless bonus tracks, mak-

ing this a present Santa should be stopped from delivering at all costs.

DEBORAH Cox's *One Wish* may at first seem to be another lame attempt at what passes these days for R&B (apologies to Sam & Dave, Big Joe Turner, et al.) But what sets this apart from the pack is her refusal to smother the music in reverb or a rapping back beat. Perhaps the best example of the Canadian singer's free spirit is the first single, "Nobody's Supposed to Be Here." The song, a soul ballad with heavy gospel influence, has Cox belting it out in stark contrast to the overproduced numbers heard over the airwaves these days. The lyrics are forgettable, but she's able to save them by the virtue of her vocal ability. You won't even mind the two dance remixes that close the disc. Cox may not be ready to be mentioned in the same breath as Sam & Dave, but hold on, she's coming.

THE Dutch aggregate Total Touch has been watching too much MTV Europe.

*This Way* is an unsuccessful Low Country/low-rent clone of the diva sound perfected by Mariah Carey and Whitney Houston. Complete with an opening rap backbeat and minutes of orgasmic growling in echo heaven, *This Way* uses every dance-music cliché it can copy off the videos. For a more authentic taste of Holland, better to stick to importing Dutch cheese.

ALREADY a superstar in her native Poland, Edyta Gorziak is ready to conquer the rest of the world on her English-language self-titled debut.

Local listeners may recall that she placed second in 1994's Eurovision, although her real international breakthrough was in 1995 when a brief appearance on a London stage garnered five offers of recording contracts.

Utilizing producer Chris Neil—who has worked with Celine Dion, Sheena Easton and Cher—and snagging songs by the likes of Billy Steinberg and Rick Nowells, who have penned tunes for Dion, Michael Jackson and Madonna, Gorziak eases into the pop mainstream, with aplomb. Touching on Latin beats, a country flavor, and on "I Don't Know What's On Your Mind," a down-and-dirty slow R&B tune reminiscent of Aretha Franklin's "Do Right Woman," Gorziak makes the case for Warsaw as the next musical hotbed.



## Little satisfaction for too much money

### Theater Roundup



By Naomi Doudai

**BEAUTY AND THE BEAST**  
Written and directed  
by Menahem Golan  
Tel Aviv Cinema  
December 18

Enterprising commercial companies cashing in on the demand for children's productions over Hanukkah have always come up with glossy shows at glossy prices.

This year a family of five had to cough up well over NIS 500 to see *Beauty and the Beast*. Justifiably, Golan Globus will probably plead, since they have invested a mint of money in what is a blitz of gilt and glitz, sophisticated sound, lighting and spectacular costumes.

The result is vulgarity elevated to a high art and rapturously received by parents and children alike. Evidently, the trip to this never-never land is worth every penny.

**KRAPP'S LAST TAPE**  
Directed by David Hinn,  
performed and co-directed by  
Edward Petherbridge  
Kfar Sava Auditorium  
December 19

An entirely different set of expectations was entertained by a different group of spectators who were dismally disappointed by the performance of what can only be called an eccentric, not to mention egocentric, interpretation of a Samuel Beckett classic.

Beckett's search for the self, his profound exploration of identity problems and existential anguish, and his despairing examination of the human condition were briefly

and facetiously brushed aside to make way for an exhibition of easy entertainment.

Edward Petherbridge, an elderly actor, held a wry, irascible encounter with the tapes accompanied by long but not at all pregnant silences, and unaccountable, boring stretches of stage business.

Whether as compensation for an unsatisfactory performance, or an attempt to captivate the audience through participation, the disconnected, pseudo-intellectual disquisition and irrelevant jokes of a compulsive raconteur did little to relieve the gloom of an unrewarding evening.

**THE CONCERT**  
by Agmon Goren  
Beit Lessin Theater  
Tel Aviv

*The Concert*, directed by Ben Levin, is a more conventionally conceived play. Strengthened by an elegant and economic set (by Dror Herrenson and Orna Smorgonsky), it is nonetheless weakened by an ending that winds up the ongoing explosions of marital and soul-searing strife with a saccharine conclusion—an easy way out.

The scapegoat of family dissonance here is a precocious boy, also aged 11, son of a music-obsessed woman conductor and her long-suffering husband.

The play opens with the frustrated father (Rafi Tabor) finally backing out from what has become an impossible marriage. The boy, the bone of contention between two ever-battling parents, plays go-between, determined to beat them at their own game.

The role, played with consummate cool by Oshri Cohen, is central to the stormy scenes and sordid quarrels that dominate the steamy parental relationship. Dafna Rechter, despite shrewish twitches and off-putting mannerisms, manages an impassioned performance as the besotted virtuoso wrenched between motherhood and her art.

Rafi Tabor, on the other hand, plays her sorely tried spouse with a quiet but deeply felt and moving sincerity that comes as a welcome relief.

### Concert Roundup



Playing with devotion and refreshing youthful ardor, the musicians showcased their infallible technique and ability to render the score in the most profound manner.

**The Jerusalem Quartet**  
Tel Aviv Performing  
Arts Center  
December 8

The opening violin cantilena in Haydn's "Sunrise" Quartet in B flat major, Op. 76/4, bewitched the listener with its romantic beauty, while the Adagio was vividness itself.

The captivating finale of the "Death and the Maiden" Quartet No. 14 in D minor, D.810, by Schubert, was performed with utmost virtuosity, and although a few inner links in this heartrending opus were somewhat lacking, on the whole it was more than impressive.

After the intermission, striking a perfect balance between emotionality and restraint in the Quintet for Clarinet and Strings in B minor, by Brahms, the ensemble provided solid support to Sharon Kam's warm and flexible instrument.

**IPO plays Schoenberg and MacMillan**  
Jerusalem International  
Convention Center  
December 17

Last week's concert, under the decisive and evocative baton of IPO chief guest conductor Antonio Pappano, was a welcome and rare occasion. Half the program was 20th-century music.

The five orchestral pieces by Schoenberg are neither easy to play nor to comprehend. But the IPO was in superb form under Pappano and these five relatively short studies in clusters of sounds emerged quite captivating, most sensitive

and at times even touching. Accolades to Pappano and the orchestra also for their performance of contemporary Scottish composer James MacMillan's *Veni, Veni, Emmanuel*, a concerto for a huge battery of percussion instruments and orchestra with Evelyn Glennie as soloist.

Glennie is a fine musician and a true performer. Walking barefoot on stage, she spent most of the 25 minutes of this opus moving from one percussion instrument to another, from vibraphone to drums bells and vice versa, with utmost musicianship and professionalism. Yet her performance left us totally detached, because this particular opus concentrates not on real music making but on the gimmick of being able to play on as many instruments as possible within a short time.

The audience applauded Glennie enthusiastically. The music, which received and deserved little applause, was played meticulously well by the orchestra. Hopefully the IPO will continue to perform exciting contemporary music on a regular basis.

**Liturgia**  
Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra  
Karnaserkantorei  
Klein choir  
Masses by Mozart and Gounod  
Jerusalem Theater  
December 17

Two liturgical masterworks—masses by Mozart (*Coronation*) and Gounod (*St. Cecilia*)—were a well-chosen combination for the opening of the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra's Liturgia series.

The performance's real hero was Cologne's Karnaserkantorei choir. Its rich and mellow sound, pure intonation, perfect balance, power of conviction and exciting enthusiasm made the choral sections such as Gounod's "Agnus Dei," "Credo," "Et resurrexit" and "Sanctus" the event's glorious highlights.

The voices' radiance sounded as if choir members could have adequately delivered the solo parts as well. Unfortunately, this did not happen.

The soloists, on the other hand, might have been used to better advantage in the choir, where their individual shortcomings would have been mercifully camouflaged. Under Uriel Segal's direction,



Soprano Linda Perillo

the JSO was well-articulated, inspired, and produced a finely nuanced and colorful instrumental sound.

Ury Eppstein

**Liturgia**  
The Al-Aksa Mosque Choir  
Bustan Avraham ensemble  
Jerusalem Theater  
December 19

A rare opportunity to enjoy Islamic liturgy was offered by the Al-Aksa Mosque Choir in the Liturgia series. Their devoted and dignified singing offered a genuine religious experience.

There was nothing liturgical though about Bustan Avraham's program. For ethnic-music fans who had no liturgical expectations, however, their performance was a feast.

Master oud player Taiseer Elias, in his imaginative improvisations, may stray far from his ethnic sources but happily always finds his way back to them. A piece in an Arabic maqam tonality, played in jazz style, was as amusing as it was pretentious. Nassim Dakwar's violin sounded whining and sentimental in any style.

Miguel Herstein tried hard to make his guitar sound like an oud—a superfluous, strenuous effort since a real oud was sitting near him anyway. Zohar Fresco, an inspired percussionist, opened the program with one of its most captivating pieces. Double-bassist Naor Carmi's fascinating solo was shorter than one would have wished.

So long as the group carries on with its attempts at blending the unblendables, some significant results may, hopefully, emerge at last.

Ury Eppstein

**The Israel Camerata**  
Currende Choir  
Magnificats by Buxtehude, Vivaldi, Pergolesi and Sammartini  
Jerusalem Theater  
December 15

Four Magnificats in one single program of the Israel Camerata's Subscription Concert No. 3, conducted by Avner Biran, were presumably meant to be a special attraction. But though it looked attractive on the program, the actual concert was somewhat accumulatively fatiguing—an overdose of solemnity and festivity in one form

and to the same text.

Musically the most outstanding was the one by Buxtehude. His characteristic sweetness of melody and sharply profiled phrases produce an emotional intensity that is uncommon in this pre-Bach period.

Pergolesi's work was the one with the most lightheartedness and gaiety; it succeeded in "serving God with joy."

Giovanni Battista Sammartini's version exemplified the dramatic and pompous style of late Baroque. Operatic in style and approach was Vivaldi's setting, not surprising from a composer of 44 operas.

Vivaldi was also the one who allowed Linda Perillo's bright, pure soprano to be enjoyed to best advantage, as well as Jonathan Peter Kenny's pleasing and soft, though somewhat indifferent-sounding, countertenor. In the other works, the solo voices tended to be swallowed up by the orchestra.

Particularly remarkable was Simon Birchall's dark-timbered, warm, and agreeably forceful bass.

Belgium's Currende Choir sounded accurate and firmly consolidated. Most pleasing were the well-rounded altos. The sopranos, though clear and polished, sounded somewhat thin and shrill in the higher register.

Ury Eppstein



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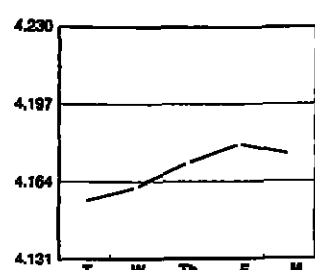
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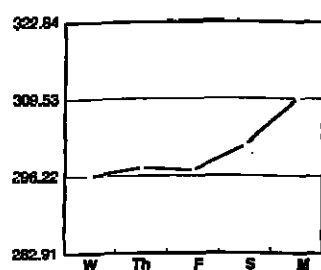
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in brief

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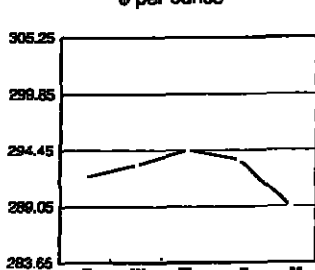


## MAOF INDEX



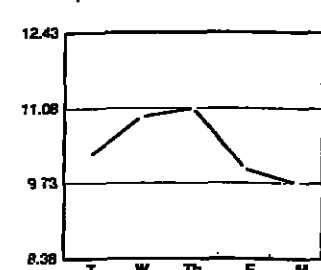
## GOLD

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## OIL

\$ per barrel of Brent crude



## October unemployment down to 8.3%

Unemployment totaled 8.3 percent at the end of October, a slight reduction from September's figure of 8.4%, according to data published yesterday by the Central Bureau of Statistics.

The total number of unemployed has consistently declined during the second half of the year. Unemployment soared to 8.7% from March through June, falling to 8.6% in July, 8.5% in August and 8.4% in September. October's unemployment statistic was determined according to trend figures, a newer method of statistical measurement that takes into account seasonal adjustments such as holidays, said Central Bureau of Statistics spokesperson David Neumann.

Jessica Steinberg

## Givot Olam hopes to raise NIS 17m.

Oil exploration company Givot Olam announced yesterday that it will try to raise NIS 16.8 million tomorrow on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange by offering stocks. The company said it will use the money for carrying out drilling at the Meged-3 site near Rosh Ha'ayin. The share issue was postponed from last week following a demand of the Securities Authority to include details concerning its findings in the nearby Meged-2 drill.

Dan Gerstenfeld

## Jlem Bank to offer mutual funds for first time

Jerusalem Capital Markets, a subsidiary of Jerusalem Bank, said yesterday it intends to offer four new mutual funds next year. The first fund will invest in shekel deposits and unlinked government bonds. The bank said it has decided to start its activity by offering such a fund, as unlinked bonds posted higher returns during the last four years than inflation and dollar-linked bonds.

Dan Gerstenfeld

## 193,000 visitors enter country in November

Some 193,000 visitors entered the country during November, 133,700 of them by air, in what the Central Bureau of Statistics described as the continuing instability of the flow of incoming tourists. The bureau said that after adjustment for seasonal factors, September showed a drop in incoming tourism, while August and October indicated increases, and November remained steady.

Of the total number of entries last month, 24,300 of them were on cruise ships and 34,400 came by land. Of the latter, 11,100 came from Egypt via Eilat and 18,500 arrived from Jordan through the Arava, Allenby or Jordan River crossing points.

Haim Shapiro

## Treasury freezes 'amutot' funding

The Treasury's budget department has frozen as much as NIS 1 million intended for non-profit organizations ('amutot), its representatives told the Knesset Finance Committee yesterday. The funds will be held in reserve until the ministries involved - Religious Affairs, Education and Labor and Social Affairs - can determine which ministry should budget for each association. Over 750 amutot are receiving duplicate funding from several government ministries, totaling NIS 2.9 million, MK Ophir Pines-Paz said yesterday during the debate. The Religious Affairs Ministry offers the biggest chunk of funding to amutot, supplying NIS 750m. from its coffers to 289 special-interest groups, according to Pines.

Jessica Steinberg

## Tadiran Telecom wins \$3 million contract

Tadiran Telecom has been awarded a \$3 million contract to provide fixed wireline access solutions to the national telecommunications operator in Kazakhstan, it was announced yesterday.

Petah Tikva-based Tadiran Telecom, which specializes in telecommunications solutions and equipment, will deliver its MultiGain enhanced systems to Kazakhtelecom. The foreign company is expanding its telecommunications network to meet growing demand for telephony and Internet usage in the republic.

Nicky Blackburn

## Treasury seeking to launch tax reform before elections

By DAVID ZEY HARRIS

The Treasury is seeking to launch the first stage of a multi-year tax reform before any early general election, ministry officials said yesterday.

In order to move in this direction, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu yesterday asked outgoing Income Tax Commissioner Doron Levy to remain in his post for an additional month, until the end of January.

A joint statement from the Treasury and Prime Minister's Office said Netanyahu, as acting finance minister, has instructed the Treasury "to examine the issues which the Finance Ministry is presently tackling, in particular the tax-reform program."

Levy's deputy, Yoni Kaplan, was to have taken over for an initial three months, but

that decision has now been put on hold.

The key principles of former finance minister Yaakov Neeman's reform were:

- reducing the top tax bracket from 60 percent to 35%, including National Insurance contributions;

- funding the cut in the upper tax bracket by finding some NIS 11 billion by abolishing and reducing tax benefits;

- insisting on each citizen filing an annual tax report;

- implementing the entire reform in one fell swoop, originally on January 1.

Levy's remaining in office after Neeman's resignation affords Netanyahu the opportunity to implement the reform without necessarily having to remove exemptions, particularly in the buildup to early elections, said one source.

During recent internal Treasury discus-

sions Neeman had suggested the need to cut exemptions, while Levy maintained it was possible to plan a multi-year reform without removing benefits. Levy believes it is possible to save between NIS 1b. and NIS 1.5b. in each of the next three years, without axing the exemptions which are popular with many segments of the electorate.

"We can do this in the next month or so," said the source. "All the plans are ready, they just need the final touches."

Throughout last year, while Neeman said the reform must be enacted as a single unit, Levy argued in favor of the multi-year approach.

"This would allow Netanyahu to lower income tax without making enemies," said another Treasury official.

The Prime Minister's Office last night said it is possible that a partial reform will

still be implemented. "We're presently looking at this possibility very seriously," said a Netanyahu spokesman.

Meanwhile, Treasury Director-General Ben-Zion Zilberfarb yesterday met ministry officials dealing with the need for immigrants to report on earnings from overseas savings and assets. The officials told him it is time to reconsider the need for immigrants to file reports, as these earnings are tax free - a measure introduced this year, which has retroactive force through January 1998.

Until the wider reform is implemented, there is no point insisting on this procedure, the officials told Zilberfarb. The director-general said he would make a decision on the matter in the next few days after he has received a report on the issue from the Income Tax Commission.

## 3Com invests \$5m. in Israeli Net fund

By NICKY BLACKBURN

Multinational 3Com Corporation is to invest \$5 million in a new Israeli-based venture capital fund, Orion Israel Fund LP, which aims to raise \$110 million for Internet investment, it was announced yesterday.

Orion was founded in April 1998 to invest in Israeli or Israeli-related companies in the fields of Internet-related software and hardware, applications and tools.

The venture capital fund's strategy is to forge a partnership with one major investor from each industry. Microsoft serves as a founding corporate affiliate to the fund, which has already raised about half the capital it is seeking.

The goal of the Orion Fund is to actively seek out and identify Internet-related technology companies in Israel and provide them with the capital, ongoing assistance and strategic support to enable them to prosper," said Eyal Levy, Orion's managing partner.

"Support from major international technology players such as 3Com will enable these companies to focus key technologies, products and services for the next generation of the Internet."

"Through our investment in Orion we have the opportunity to team up with other leading companies to provide customers and businesses with access to the technologies that will drive the future of the Internet," said Eric Benhamou, 3Com Corporation's chairman and CEO.

3Com, which is investing in the fund through its business development subsidiary, 3Com Ventures, will become part of the fund's corporate affiliates team.



French unemployed protest for higher benefits

Unemployed protesters are held back by riot police while demonstrating for an increase in unemployment benefits and a Christmas bonus yesterday in the center of Paris. Similar protests were staged in some 60 cities throughout France. (AP)

## TTI wins \$14m. Belgium deal

By DAN GERSTENFELD

TTI Telecom yesterday announced it had won a \$14 million, three-year contract from Belgacom S.A. for the purchase of a turnkey network-management system.

TTI, a provider of software solutions for telecom service providers, said that under the agreement it will supply the Belgian telecom company with an open platform for monitoring traffic, collecting data, and tracking network usage in real time.

In a statement, the Petah Tikva-based TTI said that the agreement, which is the largest contract awarded to the company ever, will allow it to win other orders from telecom operators mainly in Europe, in which the communication market has recently been deregulated.

The company said, however, that in the near future it will continue to generate the majority of its revenues from repeat customer orders and medium-size contracts. The company, which is a subsidiary of Team Computers & Systems, had revenues of \$12.2m. in 1997.

Belgacom is Belgium's national telecommunications provider, servicing 4.8 million subscribers in the areas of local, international, GSM cellular and satellite communications.

TTI develops, markets, and supports advanced modular, integrated software products and services for the telecommunications industry. Its application tools are used by telecommunications companies worldwide, including Sweden's Tele2 AB, UK based RSL-Com, Germany's VIAG Interkom, SaskTel in Canada, Embratel in Brazil, and HK Telecom in Hong Kong.

## Tenant aid may replace housing tax exemptions

By DAVID ZEY HARRIS

The Treasury is considering increasing housing aid available to tenants if the Knesset agrees to abolish income tax exemptions on rented property. Deputy Income Tax Commissioner Ehud Barzilay said yesterday.

Speaking before the Knesset taxation sub-committee, Barzilay said the plan to lift the exemption is not intended to harm tenants. Instead, property owners would be taxed at an initial 10 percent annually.

There has been widespread criticism of the proposal, with Yisrael Ba'aliya MKs claiming property

owners will recoup any additional payments through increased rental payments.

"The idea should be to [help] the consumer, not the property owner," said Barzilay. "The Treasury is examining increasing mortgage subsidies as an alternative to the tax exemption, encouraging borrowers to purchase

rather than rent apartments.

Construction industry representatives said it no longer pays to invest in real estate, adding that the actual income tax payment will be considerably higher than 10%.

"According to [the Treasury's] calculation, the 10% takes into account only rental receipts and not actual expenditures such as repairing solar heating panels," said Association of Contractors and Builders acting president Avigdor Freud. "I think the 10% will be more like 30-40% in reality."

Representatives of both the Construction and Housing and Immigration and Absorption ministries objected to the Treasury's plan.

"What does the exemption do? You have to figure that out first," said Deputy Construction and Housing Minister Meir Porush's economics adviser, Chaim Fialkoff. He asked the Treasury to delay its decision for three

months, allowing time to assess the results of a Housing Ministry study of the issue.

Participants at the debate agreed the chances of any tax changes being introduced in the coming months are minimal. With elections looming, politicians will hesitate before abolishing any exemptions that could harm the interests of any group of voters, they said.

Furthermore, former finance minister Yaakov Neeman's wider tax reform seems unlikely to be implemented in the near future, given his resignation, according to Treasury State Revenues Administration Deputy Director Meir Kapota.

"It's now very hard to bring about one global reform in the current situation," he said. However, he said that should not stop the Treasury from attempting to gradually introduce changes, which aim to reduce the top income tax brackets, while abolishing many existing exemptions.

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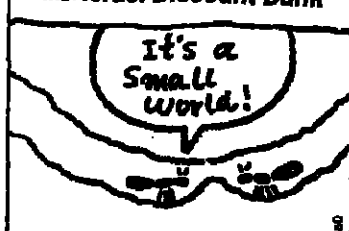
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# The real island of stability

Having completed a remarkable transition from farming to low tech to high tech, Taiwan has managed to avoid the Asian flu

By AMOTZ ASA-EL

**TAIPEI** - Just a few minutes' drive from one another, in this unassuming but bustling metropolis of 2.7 million people, three disparate markets tellingly unveil the secret formula which has turned Taiwan into the mercantile wonderland that weathered even this turbulent year's trans-continental market mayhem.

First, there is the night market. It is well past midnight, but thousands of vendors and throngs of shoppers cram Tung Hua Street and scores of alleys around it, amid a cacophony of peddler shouts, car horns and cop whistles. Apparently oblivious to the late hour and annoying drizzle, they size, sniff and bargain over anything and everything from squirming rattle snakes and glistening Seiko watches to fresh-fried frog legs and three-piece Pierre Cardin suits.

Beyond this unique assembly of old, young, poor, rich, humble and upscale merchants, clients and goods lurk the mobility, humility and mischief which are the mainstays of a remarkable economic success story.

In Taipei's financial markets, however, the atmosphere is markedly different. At the Hua Nan Commercial Bank, well-tailored and dead-serious chief broker Yen Hsin-Hsien quietly gazes at a wall-sized electronic billboard, where a red-and-green alphabet soup of Chinese characters and Roman figures rapidly blinked, froze and winked according to the ups and downs of

yet another trading day.

Surveying with a visitor the sparse, drowsy, mainly elderly audience at hand, he explained the local public's general apathy toward the stock market, in which a relatively scant 400 companies are traded at a daily volume of some \$4 billion. "Unlike Japan's, ours is not a bubble economy; our banks never handed out loans indiscriminately, the government didn't mismanage the budget and we had no insider-trading plagues. So when the rest of Asia's markets collapsed, we were hurt - but by no means decimated," he said.

To see just how intact Taiwan's economy remained despite the Asian flu, go to a third market, the gigantic World Trade Center on Hsin-Yi Rd.

At this mall-sized merchants' Mecca, Taiwanese firms display thousands of products ranging from camera tripods, house lamps and riot gear to power generators, telephone jacks, and electric scooters. Just under these permanent displays, at the football stadium-sized ground floor, there was a computer software show, attended by thousands of customers amid clouds of balloons, fliers, posters and LCD screens ranging in size from entire walls to palm tops.

Watching from a higher floor the scores of IBM, Microsoft, H&P, Apple, Compaq, Lotus and Intel stalls servicing swarms of predominantly college-aged clients measuring a host of word-processing, graphic-design and accounting packages, External Trade Council officer Yeh Sun-hua said wryly: "We have 1,100 trade

offices in this complex, where we host annually about 110 exhibitions, each lasting only a few days; about a quarter of them are international."

This is where the night and equity markets' traditions and frugality are complemented by a fast post-industrializing economy's rapid globalization.

**INDEED**, amid breath-taking political change, Taiwan's old economic stereotype of unskilled laborers manning endless, low-paying, low-tech conveyor belts has given way to a high-tech revolution on-shore and a celebration of entrepreneurship off-shore.

The numbers are astonishing. With gross domestic product at some \$250 billion, Taiwan sports the world's third-highest foreign-currency reserves at some \$85b, and the 20th-highest per-capita product. Inflation and unemployment are both under 3 percent, while growth is expected to total by year's end 5%, a unique accomplishment in any circumstances, but particularly in a landscape dominated by the negative growth rates of such major economies as Japan, Indonesia, Hong Kong and Korea.

Similarly, when neighboring currencies plunged well more than 50% against the US dollar, Taiwan's new dollar lost a mere 20%, while maintaining a trade surplus of \$6b, a current-account surplus of \$5.5b, and a meaningful foreign debt of under \$1b.

In short, no economist would dispute that the term "island of stability," which was at one point

suggested, but only partly accepted, for Israel's economy in 1998, perfectly suits Taiwan's.

There is, of course, a variety of reasons behind this distinctiveness, including those diligence, conservatism and agility which even an accidental tourist can detect while roaming Taipei's markets.

Yet beyond these looms tall what can be broadly described as the mainland factor.

Neither Mao Zedong nor Chiang Kai-shek could probably envisage this kind of aftermath to their decades of conflict, bickering and boycott, but the fact is that the little island, which hardly passes for an anecdote in Chinese history, has now become a major engine of the mainland's economy.

History apparently had to wait for those controversial founders of modern China's alternative states to disappear, before their nuclearized sibling rivalry could be turned into a mending-wall poem of newly sensitized neighbors.

"We have come a long way," said Dr. Chang King-yuh, chairman of Taipei's Mainland Affairs Council, referring to 300,000 annual visits from the mainland, and some \$30b. in bilateral trade. "What we now want is stable and quiet relations on both sides of the Taiwan Straits," he said.

Considering that all private-sector traffic across the straits - most of which is still conducted via Hong Kong - was unleashed a mere decade ago, both Beijing and Taipei seem puzzled as they search, in vain, for ways to reconcile ideology and reality. Each, after all, still contends passionately that the other's is an illegitimate government.

Beijing is fearful that with the Taiwanese come the winds of freedom. Meanwhile, it also has to contend with Taiwan's young but functioning democracy, which mainland officials fear might lead to secession. Hence Beijing's paradoxical relief following recent local and parliamentary elections, where the KMT - heirs to the Kuomintang establishment which founded Nationalist China - generally expanded its power base.

The KMT is the lesser of two evils, from the mainland's view point, since it rejects the main opposition Democratic Progressive Party's independence platform, calling instead for reunification, which is a euphemism for worshipping the status quo. "All I want is to be able to continue with my business as usual," businessman Paul Chen, vice president of the Caves book-store chain, said in his Taipei office, echoing the pragmatic zeitgeist. A few days earlier, the KMT's Ma Yin-jou, a Harvard-educated lawyer whose campaign posters always showed him jogging, unseated the capital's DPP mayor Chen Shui-bian.

Taipei's predicament is much tougher than Beijing's, however, since it must still bear in mind the

possibility that Beijing will one bright morning do something rash.

That, for instance, is why Taiwan forbids its growing army of off-shore investors to participate in infrastructure projects on the mainland, or why the government's official yearbook candidly deems as "worrysome" growing cross-strait trade, already well on its way to comprising 20% of Taipei's overall exports.

And so, in a delicate compromise between contradictory forces, Taiwan is focusing on exporting entire production lines to the mainland, where labor costs are often 10 times lower than they are on the island. Taiwan's world-leading (in terms of turnover) footwear industry, for instance, has largely relocated, as have thousands of other small- and medium-sized enterprises with up to 800 employees, the so-called SME's, which add up to 98% of Taiwan's 1.024 million registered businesses.

Feverishly expanding at home, meanwhile, are the high-tech and services industries.

Whereas low-tech has gradually declined from nearly half the economy in 1980 to some 35% today, and while farming has dropped from 30% a generation ago to 3.3%, services are well on their way to comprising two-thirds of the Taiwanese economy.

A MICROCOSM of all this transformation can be seen in the Hsinchu industrial park, just over an hour's drive south of Taipei.

Located on real-estate that still belongs nominally to the national sugar company, Taipei sought to cluster on it together high-tech firms by offering them convenient rental packages.

"The idea was to offer these companies, which are often competitors but generally benefit from each other's proximity, various services, like simplifying their dealings with Taipei's bureaucracy," said Jessie Wang of the park's investment division.

Now Hsinchu's 260 companies and 70,000 employees handle on its grounds all export-import documentation, while also enjoying special shops, banks, and clinics as well as high-quality schools aimed at catering to the demands of expatriates lured to return home from California's Silicon Valley, and even a recreational area with an artificial pond.

The park - which has an annual turnover of \$6.4b., and is one of four strewn across the island, with several more in various planning stages - resoundingly echoes of the Taiwanese near-conquest of the global high-tech hardware industry. The Taiwanese figured early on that PCs and their peripherals would undergo a process of commoditization, meaning that while the markets would want a famous brand-name outside a device, they would seldom notice, and never mind, the source of the components inside it.



A vendor in one of Taipei's night markets: A unique combination of conservatism, agility and globalism (Amotz Asa-El)

Gradually, Taiwanese firms took the lead in producing graphic cards, computer chips, scanners, screens, drives, mice and what not. The mice, by the way, are no longer considered high-tech products, and part of the proof is that they have been seen, lately, "swimming" west to the mainland, joked Wang.

Yet the real paradox is that earlier this century, the sugar once produced where the park now stands was Taiwan's primary source of income, and also the main reason for its occupation by Japan.

Now, after painstakingly proceeding from farming to low-tech and from there to high-tech while facing up to Beijing's and Tokyo's predatory appetites, Taiwan may seem to have finally won the upper hand. Still, even this otherwise special case is no exception to the rule that nothing is ever perfect.

On the cyclical level, with all due respect to its successful weathering so far of the financial tempest surrounding it, Taiwan's export-oriented economy must ultimately feel the repercussions of a significant decline in global trade. Exports to Indonesia, for

instance, have plunged 40% this year, according to Board of Foreign Trade Director-General Chen Ruey-long.

On the structural level, Taipei's remarkable love-hate relations with the mainland will continue to pose at least potential threats to the future of its stability; it was less than three years ago that Beijing shook Taipei's financial markets by conducting maneuvers aimed at intimidating Taiwan following President Lee Teng-hui's semi-official visit to the US.

Still, it seems that such incidents of posturing are destined to be dwarfed by the promise of pragmatic mercantilism.

Confucius said "study as if you were following someone you could not overtake, and were afraid of losing." That, in essence, is what Taiwan is busy doing, as it analyzes the rapidly changing attitudes and opportunities across the mainland, while Beijing gropes for new horizons through the murky contradictions of authoritarianism and capitalism. Indeed, what remains to be seen in this increasingly baroque tango is just who, actually, is following whom.

## The inevitable analogy

The first resemblance between Israel and Taiwan comes to mind already on the airplane, as the island's length, width and eastern mountain ridge prove to be much like Israel's, the main exception in this regard being that the metropolis of Taipei ends up roughly where our hick-town Shlomo would be.

Comparisons between Israel and Taiwan are indeed inevitable. They are the two most successful of the intellectual capacity and economic wherewithal they possibly could in order to prevail over an acute lack of raw materials. Like us, they must always set aside precious resources for a multibillion-dollar defense machine; and an uphill struggle for international recognition.

Like a succession of Israeli governments, there is an ongoing effort in Taiwan to lure *yordim* back home. And like our politics, theirs pit an affluent, better educated and diplomatically moderate founding establishment - the KMT - against a relatively low-brow, populist, nationalist and

nationalist alternative, the DPP. We have *ashkenazim*, they have - as a sort of slur - "mainlanders," as opposed to native islanders.

And now Taiwan also has a decade-old democracy which Taipei proudly, and shrewdly, assumes as its major claim to the moral high ground in its ongoing struggle with Beijing. "Reunification will become a realistic prospect only once the democracies," say foreign ministry officials, not unlike what some Israeli leaders sometimes say about Middle East peace.

Yet with all due respect to this trivia, Israeli foreign policy, much like the rest of the West's, unequivocally sides with Beijing when it comes to all matters of formal recognition.

At the same time, there is elaborate, hectic, ever-expanding trade, including a semi-official, five-year-old trade and culture office in Taipei, which is also what nearly 50 other countries have set up there, with Beijing's tacit approval.

Hence, Israeli-Taiwanese trade has nearly quadrupled over the

past decade, as it crossed last year the \$0.5b. post, with the balance tipped 58%-42% in Taiwan's favor.

The synergy is natural, said Akiva Turk, until recently our envoy in Taipei, since their hardware industry and our software houses beg to be binged together. Some companies, in fact, like Orbotech, Camtek and Orbot Instruments keep permanent offices in Taipei.

The Taiwanese, said Turk, also think very highly, and enviously, of Israel's successful emergence in recent years from its own diplomatic isolation, an accomplishment they often attribute to the Jewish lobby's clout in Washington.

On the other hand, they have the equivalent of a New Middle East. "Imagine," said Turk, "that Syria, Jordan and Egypt were Israel's major trading partners, and that an occasional exchange of nasty diplomatic faxes would substitute our conflict's recurring doses of military and civilian casualties."

## Siemens is high on Israeli high tech

Already heavily invested here, the German electronics giant is scanning 100 local start-ups for possible ventures

When Hermann J. Koelle, the representative of Siemens AG in China, was approached by an Israeli ambassador in 1994 and asked what business Israel could undertake with the Chinese, Koelle suggested agriculture.

Five years later, Koelle, now the managing director of Siemens Israel, realizes it was the wrong advice. "At that time, I didn't know that Israel's real strength lies in high-tech," he says.

Now, however, he understands, and so does his company.

In the last few years, the German giant, which is one of the largest electrical and electronic corporations in the world, with sales of \$70.5 billion in fiscal 1998, has directly invested DM 150 million in Israeli start-up companies; another DM 40m. through the venture capital fund, Star; signed joint-venture agreements with Israeli companies; and, in addition, each year sells DM 200-300m. worth of products to Israeli companies.

At a time when many multinationals have exhibited uncertainty about investing in Israel, Dr. Heinrich v. Pierer, the president and CEO of Siemens, recently singled the country out as a target for future high-tech cooperation.

"We plan to increase our direct participation in the country," he told guests in a surprise announcement at the company's annual press conference in Munich this month. He went on to praise Israel for its "innovative entrepreneurial spirit."

SIEMENS isn't a newcomer to Israel. It proudly traces its history back to the time of the British Mandate when it set up registered companies under the government of Palestine in the 1920s. One of the original certificates now hangs on a wall near Koelle's desk in the Siemens office in Tel Aviv, and Koelle gestures to it now and again.

Initially the company ran its Israeli business through agents. It was only in 1993, with the onset of the peace process, that the German company decided to establish an office of its own.

There was no record of the initial agreements in the company's archives, so it took a year to sort out the mess and finally open the office. Today it employs four full-time staff members and one part-time person.

"The peace process was the motivation for the decision to have our own company here," acknowledges Koelle. "Everyone was expecting that peace would bring the region together economically. We had an idea that the Siemens office would become a center for competence where we could offer support to other neighboring countries. Israel's just a short drive to Jordan or Lebanon, and it had all the necessary requirements to be a good base for business - democracy, industrialization, well-educated people, infrastructure and the biggest high-tech industry in the region."

The company also hoped to be able to sell more of its own products to Israeli firms. In the last four years Siemens has certainly moved in this direction, though even Koelle admits the movement hasn't been as fast or effective as management had hoped.

Today Siemens has direct investment in six Israeli companies. Top of the list is Siemens Data Communications (formerly Ornet), a 100-percent owned Karmiel-based company that develops telecommunications products. Siemens also has a majority stake in Seabridge (formerly RADnet), which manufactures access switches for ATM networks; Siemens Circuit Protection Partnership; and IC Com, a specialist in electronic telecommunication chips.

Finally, it has a 10% share in Netanya-based Savan Communications, and also in Floware System Solutions of Or-Yehuda. "We are normally looking for companies with knowledge or technology that we need for our global activities, either because our own development is behind, or because it's something really new and brilliant that didn't occur to us before," says Koelle.

Siemens has also invested another 40

million marks in about 20 Israeli start-ups through the venture capital fund Star Venture Capital Management.

The company is now examining another 100 or so start-ups for possible joint ventures. "We may do some kind of cooperation with maybe five of these," says Koelle. "We may not always invest money, but might sign a contract to sell their equipment, or they may develop or research something for us."

The company also has OEMs with companies such as Orkit Communications and ECI Telecom, and has entered into a joint venture with Elscint, the maker of medical detection devices.

In addition, Siemens sells its products to Israeli companies for between 200-300 million marks a year. These products span the whole range of Siemens' business, from telephones to powerplants, and are sold through Israel's agents.

Despite all this activity, Koelle acknowledges that Siemens has achieved neither of the goals it set for itself in 1994. "Israel's economy has been in recession for the last two years, and as a result, sales of Siemens' own products have not grown as expected," says Koelle.

Then, of course, there's the peace process. "It didn't go as we hoped it would. At the time of Oslo we were all a little, what the Germans call 'blue-eyed.' We were too optimistic and unrealistic. It couldn't have happened as fast as we wanted."

"Yes, it's a disappointment, Koelle

continued. "It's been a disappointment to many people."

To make the situation worse, the company has been threatened by Arab nations angry at its heavy involvement in Israel. In February, *The Jerusalem Post* reported that the Syrian government would not consider a multimillion dollar telecommunications contract from Siemens because of the company's interests in Israel. This is not the only incident, but Koelle would prefer not to discuss it. "It's not appropriate," he says.

While these factors have had a negative impact on trade and investment in Israel, the management at Siemens seems undaunted. "Israel is an unusual country," says Koelle. "There are a lot of new ideas coming from here. It's not unusual for Siemens to be doing business with a country, but it is unusual for us to have invested 150 million marks in start-ups. This is something Siemens doesn't do in other countries. The

search to find a potential partner is much more intensive in Israel than elsewhere." (Israel Sun)

He believes that what makes Israel so unique in the high-tech arena is a combination of factors including the country's conscripted military service, the large Russian immigration, government aid to start-ups and the curiosity of Israeli engineers. "They are very open to new solutions and new technology. They don't just go in one direction like German researchers do," says Koelle. "Maybe it's

in the genes. It's something we feel strongly here."

"Israel's high-tech community is very creative and the people are dedicated. If they want to achieve something there's no evening or night when they are not working. They have a very strong wish to succeed and to earn money. They're unconventional and they don't have fixed routes like they do in Germany. This has advantages and disadvantages - their reliability regarding achievement for example."

He said that at present, Siemens employs some 40,000 people around the world in R&D alone. "They are convinced that they can invent everything, but Dr. v. Pierer believes that we have to look at what's going on outside as well, in Silicon Valley and Silicon Wadi (Israel). He wants us to push for cooperation. I'm convinced that our business with Israel will go into a faster gear, based on all that we've achieved so far."

WITH this in mind Siemens has announced that it will to found a new venture capital fund to invest in promising start-ups, whether or not they are in Siemens' traditional fields of expertise.

The company has also recently set up a new international purchasing office and plans to increase the amount of products it buys from Israel to some DM 100 m. a year.

At the end of the day, however, Siemens is still banking on peace. "It's a must. In my personal opinion it will come, and when it does, it will bring us business," says Koelle. "We're waiting for it."

To try to help the process along, Siemens recently became involved in a high-tech joint venture between Siemens Data Communications and Hi-Tek Engineering in Ramallah, a company owned by Tareq Mazayah. The plan, which is supported by the Peres Institute for Peace and possibly the Peace Technology Fund, is to establish a joint research and development center in the

### LOCAL REP

By MICHAEL KATZ



Koelle: "The search to find a potential partner is much more intensive in Israel than elsewhere."

search to find a potential partner is much more intensive in Israel than elsewhere because the likelihood of finding one is much stronger."

He believes that what makes Israel so unique in the high-tech arena is a combination of factors including the country's conscripted military service, the large Russian immigration, government aid to start-ups and the curiosity of Israeli engineers. "They are very open to new solutions and new technology. They don't just go in one direction like German researchers do," says Koelle. "Maybe it's

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# Lehmann recalled for England Test

**Magpie fans unhappy with return of board duo**

NEWCASTLE (Reuters) - The comeback of disgraced directors Douglas Hall and Freddy Shepherd faced resistance from Newcastle United's supporters yesterday but the opposition was unlikely to have any effect.

A show of hands at United's annual general meeting voted against their election to the club's board but their return is certain to be rubber-stamped when the votes of Hall and Shepherd and other major shareholders are counted.

Hall and Shepherd were at the meeting, but neither spoke to the small shareholders who expressed disquiet about the proposed sale to cable company NTL Inc.

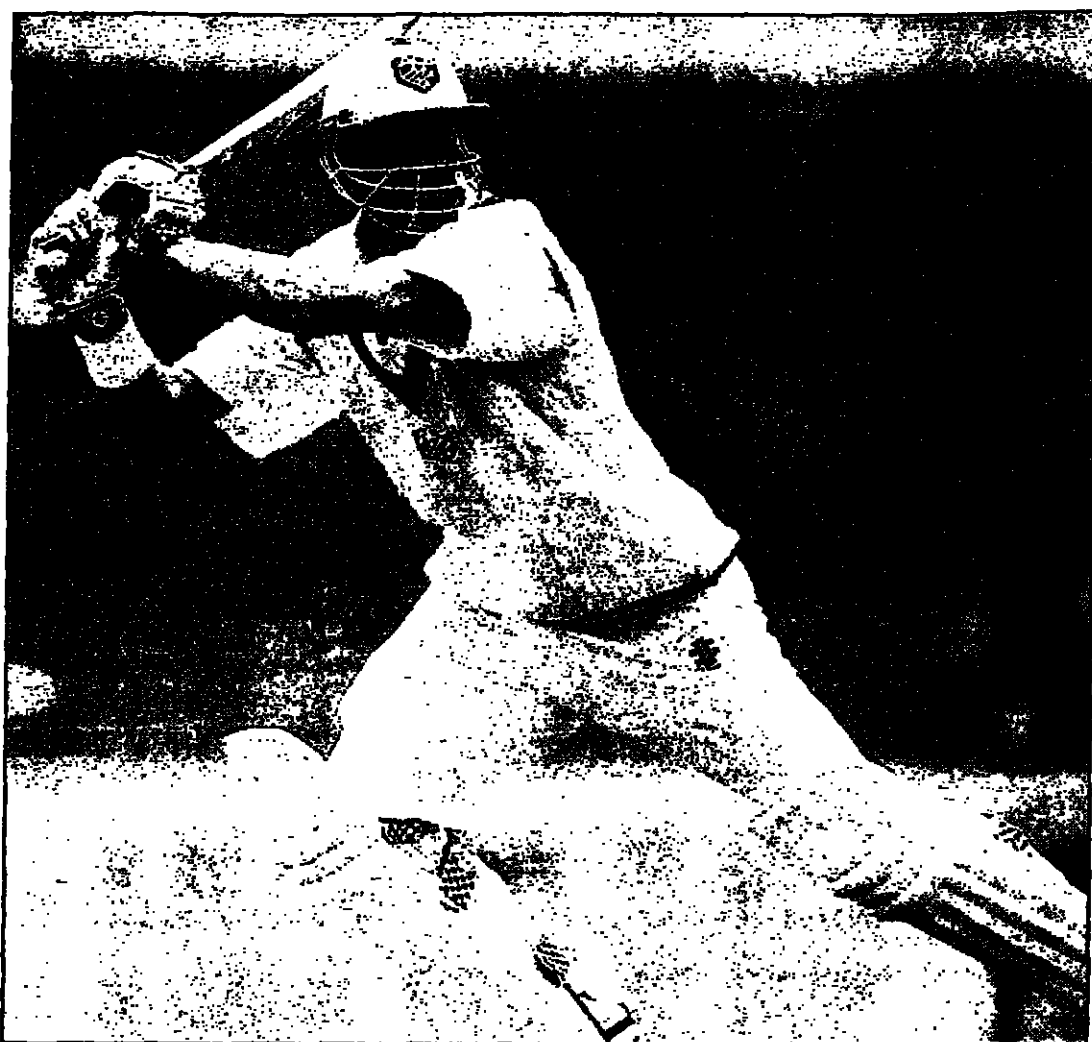
NTL is poised to make a £160 million bid for the premier league club, taking a 63 percent stake.

It was the first annual meeting since the two men were exposed by a tabloid newspaper criticizing Newcastle's fans and the women of the city and the supporters took the opportunity to attack.

"I find it sad that the present management has created such ill-will from the city and supporters," Alan Clark told the meeting.

Don Leeson said: "I've never known Newcastle United be such a laughing stock."

Hall and Shepherd sent letters of apology to season ticket holders, but Hilary Brown told the meeting: "An apology from the pitch, especially to the women, would have been much more successful."



FOR OPENERS - Australian opening batsman Matthew Elliott glances the ball for four runs during the third day of the game between the Australian XI and England at Hobart.

SYDNEY (Reuters) - Prolific batsman Darren Lehmann was recalled yesterday to the Australian side for the fourth Ashes cricket Test against England starting in Melbourne on Saturday.

The inclusion of South Australia captain Lehmann is the only change to the Australian side which last week secured their sixth successive Ashes series.

Lehmann made his Test debut against India in March and has been recalled after scoring heavily during Australia's domestic season.

He comes into the side for the traditional Boxing Day Test at the expense of number six batsman Ricky Ponting.

Australia beat England by 205 runs in the third Test in Adelaide for a 2-0 lead in the five-Test series.

Lehmann was preferred to Ponting on Australia's tour to Pakistan last month, scoring 127 runs at an average of 42.33.

But Ponting's strength against pace gave him the nod for the opening three Ashes Tests. However he paid the price after scoring just 47 runs in four innings against England.

Ponting admitted his form was not strong but said uncertainty over his position in the Test side heading into the Ashes series had affected his batting.

"It almost feels like every game you're playing is your last and you, maybe, over-emphasize things a little bit and try a little bit too hard to score runs," Ponting said.

Ponting said media coverage of his revelation last week that he had turned down a four-figure bribe from a Sydney bookmaker for team

and pitch information had not helped.

"There's been things in the paper virtually every day (about the bookies scandal)... and I've tried to stay pretty much away from all that and concentrate on the cricket," he said.

"It was hard going into the Adelaide Test, not just for me but for everyone involved in that game, and luckily enough we still played well over there. But as it's turned out I still haven't got any runs in the past couple of innings, so I'm paying for it now."

Australia: Mark Taylor (captain), Michael Slater, Justin Langer, Mark Waugh, Steve Waugh, Darren Lehmann, Ian Healy, Damien Fleming, Stuart MacGill, Jason Gillespie, Glenn McGrath, Colin Miller.

England take 342-run lead

England held a lead of 342 runs as Mark Butcher led the way in the tourists' second innings at the close of play on the third day of their four-day cricket match against the Australian XI yesterday.

England were 166 for two, with Butcher unbeaten on 85, against an injury-weakened Australian XI attack.

The home side had earlier declared their first innings at 293 for four, leaving them 176 runs behind after England opened with 469 for six declared.

At the crease with Butcher at the close was Dominic Cork, yet to score.

John Crawley returned to some welcome form for England with 63 before falling lbw to Darren Lehmann.

Butcher and Crawley put on 118

for the first wicket, with Ben Hollioake failing once again, out for 17 with the score on 164.

Earlier, Australian XI captain Lehmann declared the home side's first innings just after the tea interval in an effort to breathe life into a match dominated by the bat.

Greg Blewett top-scored with an unbeaten 169, including 15 fours, for the Australians, who resumed at 30 without loss.

Opening partner Matthew Elliott made 81, with the pair putting on 206 for the first wicket before Elliott was caught off the bowling of Hollioake.

Corey Richards (0) and Darren Lehmann (4) then fell for the addition of just six runs, before Stuart Law (21) steadied the innings.

Chanderpaul's composite boosts Windies total

Shivnarine Chanderpaul continued to milk the South Africa A attack on the third morning of West Indies' four-day match in Pietermaritzburg yesterday before finally succumbing to the last ball of the morning for 182.

After a productive morning the tourists were dismissed for 375 in their first innings at lunch as the match wended its way towards a near certain stalemate in the wake of the rain-hit first two days.

The West Indies resumed on 256-6 and lost Rawl Lewis for eight in the third over of the day when he was caught at second slip by Shaheef Abrahams off medium pacer Justin Kemp.

Nixon McLean then fired 25 off 35 balls before being trapped lbw by spinner Paul Adams, ending an eighth-wicket partnership of 46.

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### Top sportsman

French international Zinedine Zidane (c) is the winner of the Reuters 1998 Sports Personality poll. The son of Algerian immigrants, "Zizou" was the fulcrum of a multi-racial team who broke down French social barriers. Above: Zidane is congratulated by teammates Emmanuel Petit (r) and Christian Karembeu after scoring his first of two headers in the 3-0 World Cup victory over Brazil on July 12.

(Reuters)

## Stars' unbeaten streak grows to 8



**KANATA, Ontario (AP)** — Tony Hrkac scored the winner late in the second period and the Dallas Stars beat the Ottawa Senators 3-2 Sunday to extend their unbeaten streak to eight games.

The Stars are 6-0-2 in their last eight and have lost only one of their last 10 road games (7-1-2). Turek remained unbeaten at

4-0-2.

Joe Nieuwendyk and Mike Keane had the other goals for the Stars. Ottawa's goals were scored by Alexei Yashin and Andreas Johansson.

**Coyotes 4, Islanders 2**

Keith Tkachuk scored a power-play goal with 5:20 remaining as Phoenix extended its home unbeaten streak to 11 games.

Greg Adams had a goal and an assist and Juha Ylonen and Bob Corkum added goals for the Coyotes.

Mark Lawrence scored his first career goal and Eric Brewer

added another goal for the Islanders, who had their three-game unbeaten streak stopped.

**Lightning 2, Flyers 2**

Wendell Clark scored at 10:39 of the third period to give visiting Tampa Bay a tie.

Clark deflected a shot from the right circle by Alexander Selivanov past the stick side of Flyers goaltender Ron Hextall to help Tampa Bay snap a two-game losing streak.

Rod Brind'Amour and John LeClair scored for the Flyers, who extended their unbeaten streak to five (2-0-3). Sandy

McCarthy also scored for Tampa Bay, which had lost 14 of its previous 16 games and had been outscored 70-28 in that stretch.

**Kings 4, Blackhawks 1**

Donald Audette, playing his first game with Los Angeles, scored on his first shift and the Kings got two goals from Glen Murray to beat the hosts.

Audette, a 10-year NHL veteran, an right wing, skated in his first game this season after holding out with the Buffalo Sabres. Los Angeles acquired him Friday from Buffalo for a second-round '99 draft choice.

### EASTERN CONFERENCE

#### Atlantic Division

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
New Jersey	18	8	4	40	90	74
Philadelphia	14	9	8	36	86	70
Pittsburgh	13	8	7	33	82	73
N.Y. Rangers	11	13	7	29	84	86
N.Y. Islanders	12	19	1	25	79	93

#### Northeast Division

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Toronto	18	11	2	38	98	89
Buffalo	16	6	5	37	79	50
Boston	14	9	6	34	79	59
Ottawa	14	12	3	31	86	73
Montreal	8	17	6	22	68	90

#### Southeast Division

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Florida	15	12	5	35	84	74
Atlanta	11	11	6	28	73	76
Washington	9	17	3	21	60	78
Tampa Bay	8	20	3	19	64	111

### WESTERN CONFERENCE

#### Central Division

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Detroit	17	12	1	35	94	76
St. Louis	11	10	7	29	74	69
Kansas City	11	16	3	25	70	93
Chicago	9	19	4	22	71	107

#### Northwest Division

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Edmonton	14	15	3	31	88	84
Colorado	13	14	3	29	71	76
Calgary	12	16	3	27	87	90
Vancouver	11	15	4	26	84	90

#### Pacific Division

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Dallas	19	5	5	43	87	60
Phoenix	18	5	4	40	78	49
San Jose	12	11	7	31	73	69
Los Angeles	9	20	3	21	70	91

### Dallas Stars

#### 12-0-3

First Period: 1. Dallas, Nieuwendyk 9 (Langenbrunner), 12:1. 2. Ottawa, Johansson 10 (Yashin, Alfredsson), 17:20. Second Period: 3. Dallas, Keane 1 (Skudlarek), 15:14. 4. Ottawa, Martin 12 (Kovachuk, Alfredsson), 18:10. 5. Dallas, Hrkac 5 (Hatchey), 18:27. Third Period: None. Shots on goal-Dallas 5-12, 9-32, Ottawa 8-29-22, Goals-Clark, Turek, Ottawa, Tugnut, A-17,581.

#### N.Y. Islanders

#### 1-0-2

First Period: 1. Phoenix, Adams 9 (Lumme), 10:27. 2. New York, Lawrence 1 (Lapointe, Smith), 17:41. Second Period: 3. Phoenix, Turek 2 (Adams, Alfredsson), 21:15. Third Period: 4. New York, Brewer 3 (Miller, Lawrence), 2:06. 5. Phoenix, Tkachuk 10 (Clark, Hextall), 14:40. 6. Phoenix, Clark 2, 18:29. Shots on goal-New York 10-8-22, Phoenix 18-10-8-34. Goals-New York, Sato, Phoenix, Khabibulin, A-15,210.

### Tampa Bay

#### 0-1-0-2

First Period: 1. Philadelphia, Brind'Amour 13 (Gonzalez, Rumbolt), 8:43. Second Period: 2. Philadelphia, LeClair 21 (Brind'Amour, McGinnis), 8:55. 3. Tampa Bay, McCarthy 2 (Tampa Bay, Anderson), 18:23. Third Period: 4. Tampa Bay, Clark 15 (Selivanov, Gerson), 10:24. 5. Tampa Bay, Clark 15 (Selivanov, Gerson), 10:24. Shots on goal-Tampa Bay 6-11-7-4-30. Philadelphia 13-8-5-32. Goals-Clark, Tampa Bay, Hartford, Philadelphia, Hextall, A-10,322.

#### Los Angeles

#### 2-0-2-4

First Period: 1. Los Angeles, Audette 1 (Taylerson, Ferraro), 1:38. 2. Chicago, Zhamnov 8 (Audette, Gaudin), 1:54. 3. Los Angeles, Murray 17:10. Second Period: None. Third Period: 4. Los Angeles, Robitaille 16 (Stumpert), 24:5. 5. Los Angeles, Murray 15 (O'Donnell, O'Donnell), 27:32. Shots on goal-Los Angeles 10-11-13-34. Chicago 5-8-11-25. Goals-Los Angeles, Short, Chicago, Tsubota, A-15,429.

## Three minor league Mets sentenced for gang-rape

FORT PIERCE, Florida (AP) — Three minor league players for the New York Mets have been sentenced to two years in prison and two years' probation for their part in the gang-rape of a 17-year-old girl.

Jose Brea Tuent, 18, Natividad Taveza, 19, and Milton Gonzalez, 18, all of the Dominican Republic, were released on bond pending their appeal.

Though prosecutors had requested 15 years

in prison and 15 years' probation for each of them, Circuit Judge C. Pfeiffer Trowbridge sentenced the three as youthful offenders.

The three were convicted in October of raping the girl at the Port St. Lucie Holiday Inn, where they were staying during the Mets' extended spring training in April.

Prosecutor Steve Levin argued that the gang rape was not "some teenagers doing a prank. This is a crime of the worst degree," he said.

"It's a crime where you can't see the scar."

The victim was unable to come to Fort Pierce from New York to testify. In court, Levin read a letter she sent him. "I'm trying to fight the battle inside that no one sees but me," Levin read. "Deep inside I blame myself and hate myself for not stopping them."

Two other suspects, Vincent Rosario, 19, and fellow player Ruddy De La Cruz, 19, are expected to go to trial in early January.

### NFL

Continued from Page 20

#### Raiders 17, Chargers 10

Wade Wilson threw a pair of touchdown passes to lead visiting Oakland (8-7) to a victory, but Oakland was eliminated from playoff contention earlier in the day.

**In games reported in yesterday's edition:**

#### Patriots 24, 49ers 21

Adam Vinatieri's 35-yard field goal with three seconds left lifted host New England (9-6) into the playoffs as a wild-card.

#### Packers 30, Oilers 22

Brett Favre threw three touchdown passes to Antonio Freeman in steady snow flurries as Green

#### Giants 28, Kansas City 7

Host New York kept alive its slim playoff hopes and guaranteed the Chiefs their first losing season in a decade with a pounding of Kansas City.

#### Panthers 20, Rams 13

Steve Benerlein found Luther Broughton for a 68-yard touchdown pass with 2:44 remaining as Carolina rallied for a home win.

#### Bears 24, Ravens 3

James Allen rushed for 163 yards and a touchdown in his first career start and Chicago frustrated Jim Harbaugh in his return to Soldier Field.

#### Tennessee

#### 0-7-0-22

First Quarter: QB-Freeman 57 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 13:22. QB-Freeman 68 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 2:58. Second Quarter: QB-Freeman 25 pass from McNeil (Del Greco kick), 13:42. QB-Freeman 32 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 1:11. Third Quarter: QB-FG Longwell 38, 10:05. QB-FG Longwell 30 pass from McNeil (Del Greco kick), 1:35. Fourth Quarter: QB-FG Longwell 40, 7:27. QB-FG Longwell 40, 5:22. QB-FG Longwell 38 pass from McNeil (George run), 3:5. A-59,655.

#### Kansas City

#### 0-0-0-7

First Quarter: QB-Freeman 57 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 13:42. QB-Freeman 68 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 2:58. Second Quarter: QB-Freeman 25 pass from McNeil (Del Greco kick), 13:42. QB-Freeman 32 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 1:11. Third Quarter: QB-FG Longwell 38, 10:05. QB-FG Longwell 30 pass from McNeil (Del Greco kick), 1:35. Fourth Quarter: QB-FG Longwell 40, 7:27. QB-FG Longwell 40, 5:22. QB-FG Longwell 38 pass from McNeil (George run), 3:5. A-59,655.

#### San Francisco

#### 0-21-0-21

First Quarter: QB-Freeman 57 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 13:42. QB-Freeman 68 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 2:58. Second Quarter: QB-Freeman 25 pass from McNeil (Del Greco kick), 13:42. QB-Freeman 32 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 1:11. Third Quarter: QB-FG Longwell 38, 10:05. QB-FG Longwell 30 pass from McNeil (Del Greco kick), 1:35. Fourth Quarter: QB-FG Longwell 40, 7:27. QB-FG Longwell 40, 5:22. QB-FG Longwell 38 pass from McNeil (George run), 3:5. A-59,655.

#### Baltimore

#### 0-0-0-3

First Quarter: QB-Freeman 57 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 13:42. QB-Freeman 68 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 2:58. Second Quarter: QB-Freeman 25 pass from McNeil (Del Greco kick), 13:42. QB-Freeman 32 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 1:11. Third Quarter: QB-FG Longwell 38, 10:05. QB-FG Longwell 30 pass from McNeil (Del Greco kick), 1:35. Fourth Quarter: QB-FG Longwell 40, 7:27. QB-FG Longwell 40, 5:22. QB-FG Longwell 38 pass from McNeil (George run), 3:5. A-59,655.

#### St. Louis

#### 3-7-0-19

First Quarter: QB-Freeman 57 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 13:42. QB-Freeman 68 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 2:58. Second Quarter: QB-Freeman 25 pass from McNeil (Del Greco kick), 13:42. QB-Freeman 32 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 1:11. Third Quarter: QB-FG Longwell 38, 10:05. QB-FG Longwell 30 pass from McNeil (Del Greco kick), 1:35. Fourth Quarter: QB-FG Longwell 40, 7:27. QB-FG Longwell 40, 5:22. QB-FG Longwell 38 pass from McNeil (George run), 3:5. A-59,655.

#### Cincinnati

#### 3-9-0-25

First Quarter: QB-Freeman 57 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 13:42. QB-Freeman 68 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 2:58. Second Quarter: QB-Freeman 25 pass from McNeil (Del Greco kick), 13:42. QB-Freeman 32 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 1:11. Third Quarter: QB-FG Longwell 38, 10:05. QB-FG Longwell 30 pass from McNeil (Del Greco kick), 1:35. Fourth Quarter: QB-FG Longwell 40, 7:27. QB-FG Longwell 40, 5:22. QB-FG Longwell 38 pass from McNeil (George run), 3:5. A-59,655.

#### Atlanta

#### 7-3-0-24

First Quarter: QB-Freeman 57 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 13:42. QB-Freeman 68 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 2:58. Second Quarter: QB-Freeman 25 pass from McNeil (Del Greco kick), 13:42. QB-Freeman 32 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 1:11. Third Quarter: QB-FG Longwell 38, 10:05. QB-FG Longwell 30 pass from McNeil (Del Greco kick), 1:35. Fourth Quarter: QB-FG Longwell 40, 7:27. QB-FG Longwell 40, 5:22. QB-FG Longwell 38 pass from McNeil (George run), 3:5. A-59,655.

#### Denver

#### 13-1-0-29

First Quarter: QB-Freeman 57 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 13:42. QB-Freeman 68 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 2:58. Second Quarter: QB-Freeman 25 pass from McNeil (Del Greco kick), 13:42. QB-Freeman 32 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 1:11. Third Quarter: QB-FG Longwell 38, 10:05. QB-FG Longwell 30 pass from McNeil (Del Greco kick), 1:35. Fourth Quarter: QB-FG Longwell 40, 7:27. QB-FG Longwell 40, 5:22. QB-FG Longwell 38 pass from McNeil (George run), 3:5. A-59,655.

#### Oakland

#### 8-7-0-29

First Quarter: QB-Freeman 57 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 13:42. QB-Freeman 68 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 2:58. Second Quarter: QB-Freeman 25 pass from McNeil (Del Greco kick), 13:42. QB-Freeman 32 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 1:11. Third Quarter: QB-FG Longwell 38, 10:05. QB-FG Longwell 30 pass from McNeil (Del Greco kick), 1:35. Fourth Quarter: QB-FG Longwell 40, 7:27. QB-FG Longwell 40, 5:22. QB-FG Longwell 38 pass from McNeil (George run), 3:5. A-59,655.

#### Seattle

#### 8-7-0-29

First Quarter: QB-Freeman 57 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 13:42. QB-Freeman 68 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 2:58. Second Quarter: QB-Freeman 25 pass from McNeil (Del Greco kick), 13:42. QB-Freeman 32 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 1:11. Third Quarter: QB-FG Longwell 38, 10:05. QB-FG Longwell 30 pass from McNeil (Del Greco kick), 1:35. Fourth Quarter: QB-FG Longwell 40, 7:27. QB-FG Longwell 40, 5:22. QB-FG Longwell 38 pass from McNeil (George run), 3:5. A-59,655.

#### Kansas City

#### 6-9-0-26

First Quarter: QB-Freeman 57 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 13:42. QB-Freeman 68 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 2:58. Second Quarter: QB-Freeman 25 pass from McNeil (Del Greco kick), 13:42. QB-Freeman 32 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 1:11. Third Quarter: QB-FG Longwell 38, 10:05. QB-FG Longwell 30 pass from McNeil (Del Greco kick), 1:35. Fourth Quarter: QB-FG Longwell 40, 7:27. QB-FG Longwell 40, 5:22. QB-FG Longwell 38 pass from McNeil (George run), 3:5. A-59,655.

#### San Diego

#### 5-10-0-23

First Quarter: QB-Freeman 57 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 13:42. QB-Freeman 68 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 2:58. Second Quarter: QB-Freeman 25 pass from McNeil (Del Greco kick), 13:42. QB-Freeman 32 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 1:11. Third Quarter: QB-FG Longwell 38, 10:05. QB-FG Longwell 30 pass from McNeil (Del Greco kick), 1:35. Fourth Quarter: QB-FG Longwell 40, 7:27. QB-FG Longwell 40, 5:22. QB-FG Longwell 38 pass from McNeil (George run), 3:5. A-59,655.

#### Indianapolis

#### 7-3-0-23

First Quarter: QB-Freeman 57 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 13:42. QB-Freeman 68 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 2:58. Second Quarter: QB-Freeman 25 pass from McNeil (Del Greco kick), 13:42. QB-Freeman 32 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 1:11. Third Quarter: QB-FG Longwell 38, 10:05. QB-FG Longwell 30 pass from McNeil (Del Greco kick), 1:35. Fourth Quarter: QB-FG Longwell 40, 7:27. QB-FG Longwell 40, 5:22. QB-FG Longwell 38 pass from McNeil (George run), 3:5. A-59,655.

#### Philadelphia

#### 3-9-0-25

First Quarter: QB-Freeman 57 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 13:42. QB-Freeman 68 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 2:58. Second Quarter: QB-Freeman 25 pass from McNeil (Del Greco kick), 13:42. QB-Freeman 32 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 1:11. Third Quarter: QB-FG Longwell 38, 10:05. QB-FG Longwell 30 pass from McNeil (Del Greco kick), 1:35. Fourth Quarter: QB-FG Longwell 40, 7:27. QB-FG Longwell 40, 5:22. QB-FG Longwell 38 pass from McNeil (George run), 3:5. A-59,655.

#### Dallas

#### 19-5-0-43

First Quarter: QB-Freeman 57 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 13:42. QB-Freeman 68 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 2:58. Second Quarter: QB-Freeman 25 pass from McNeil (Del Greco kick), 13:42. QB-Freeman 32 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 1:11. Third Quarter: QB-FG Longwell 38, 10:05. QB-FG Longwell 30 pass from McNeil (Del Greco kick), 1:35. Fourth Quarter: QB-FG Longwell 40, 7:27. QB-FG Longwell 40, 5:22. QB-FG Longwell 38 pass from McNeil (George run), 3:5. A-59,655.

#### San Diego

#### 5-10-0-23

First Quarter: QB-Freeman 57 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 13:42. QB-Freeman 68 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 2:58. Second Quarter: QB-Freeman 25 pass from McNeil (Del Greco kick), 13:42. QB-Freeman 32 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 1:11. Third Quarter: QB-FG Longwell 38, 10:05. QB-FG Longwell 30 pass from McNeil (Del Greco kick), 1:35. Fourth Quarter: QB-FG Longwell 40, 7:27. QB-FG Longwell 40, 5:22. QB-FG Longwell 38 pass from McNeil (George run), 3:5. A-59,655.

#### New Orleans

#### 0-19-0-7-17

First Quarter: QB-Freeman 57 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 13:42. QB-Freeman 68 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 2:58. Second Quarter: QB-Freeman 25 pass from McNeil (Del Greco kick), 13:42. QB-Freeman 32 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 1:11. Third Quarter: QB-FG Longwell 38, 10:05. QB-FG Longwell 30 pass from McNeil (Del Greco kick), 1:35. Fourth Quarter: QB-FG Longwell 40, 7:27. QB-FG Longwell 40, 5:22. QB-FG Longwell 38 pass from McNeil (George run), 3:5. A-59,655.

#### Arizona

#### 3-9-0-25

First Quarter: QB-Freeman 57 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 13:42. QB-Freeman 68 pass from Favre (Longwell kick), 2:58. Second Quarter: QB-Freeman 25 pass from McNeil (Del Greco kick), 13:42. QB







## Inside

**'Zizou' takes the laurels**  
Page 18

**Cricket roundup**  
Page 17

**Sports Editors:**  
Joe Hoffman & Ori Lewis

## No. 18 Oklahoma State upset

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Ryan Sears hit a 3-pointer with 57.7 seconds left and Doug Swenson made 3-of-4 from the foul line in the last minute as Creighton rallied to beat No. 18 Oklahoma State 66-60 Sunday.

In other games involving ranked teams, No. 2 Duke defeated North Carolina A&T 88-53 and No. 10 Indiana beat San Francisco 106-54.

**No. 2 Duke 88.**  
North Carolina A&T 53  
Elton Brand scored 21 points and Duke cruised past the Aggies for its 28th straight home victory. The Blue Devils (10-1) blocked a season-high 13 shots. Corey Maggette scored 16 points and Trajan Langdon added 14.

Duke plays No. 3 Kentucky on Tuesday in the Jimmy V Classic. The teams met last season in the NCAA South Regional final, when the Wildcats won 86-84.

**No. 10 Indiana 106**  
San Francisco 54

Rob Turner had 18 points and A.J. Guyton 17 in Indiana's highest-scoring game of the season.

The host Hoosiers (11-2) forced 32 turnovers. San Francisco coach Philip Mathews was ejected with 5:49 left after being called for four technical fouls.

Antwan Randle El, Indiana's starting quarterback, played his first basketball game for the Hoosiers. The freshman had five points, two rebounds and two assists.

# Falcons beat Lions, clinch division title



PONTIAC, Michigan (Reuters) — With their coach home recovering from quadruple bypass heart surgery, the Atlanta Falcons gave Dan Reeves a memorable get-well present on Sunday — a division title and a first-round bye in the playoffs.

Jamal Anderson rushed for 147 yards and scored two touchdowns as Atlanta clinched the NFC West title for only the second time in the team's 33-year history and first time since 1980 with an emotional 24-17 victory over the Detroit Lions.

"The 49ers dominated this division for so long it was time for a change," said veteran Atlanta linebacker Jesse Tuggle.

The Falcons (13-2) came up with 14 fourth-quarter points to win their absent leader, Chris Chandler hit Terrence Mathis with a 27-yard TD pass to tie the game

### Box scores, standings, Page 18

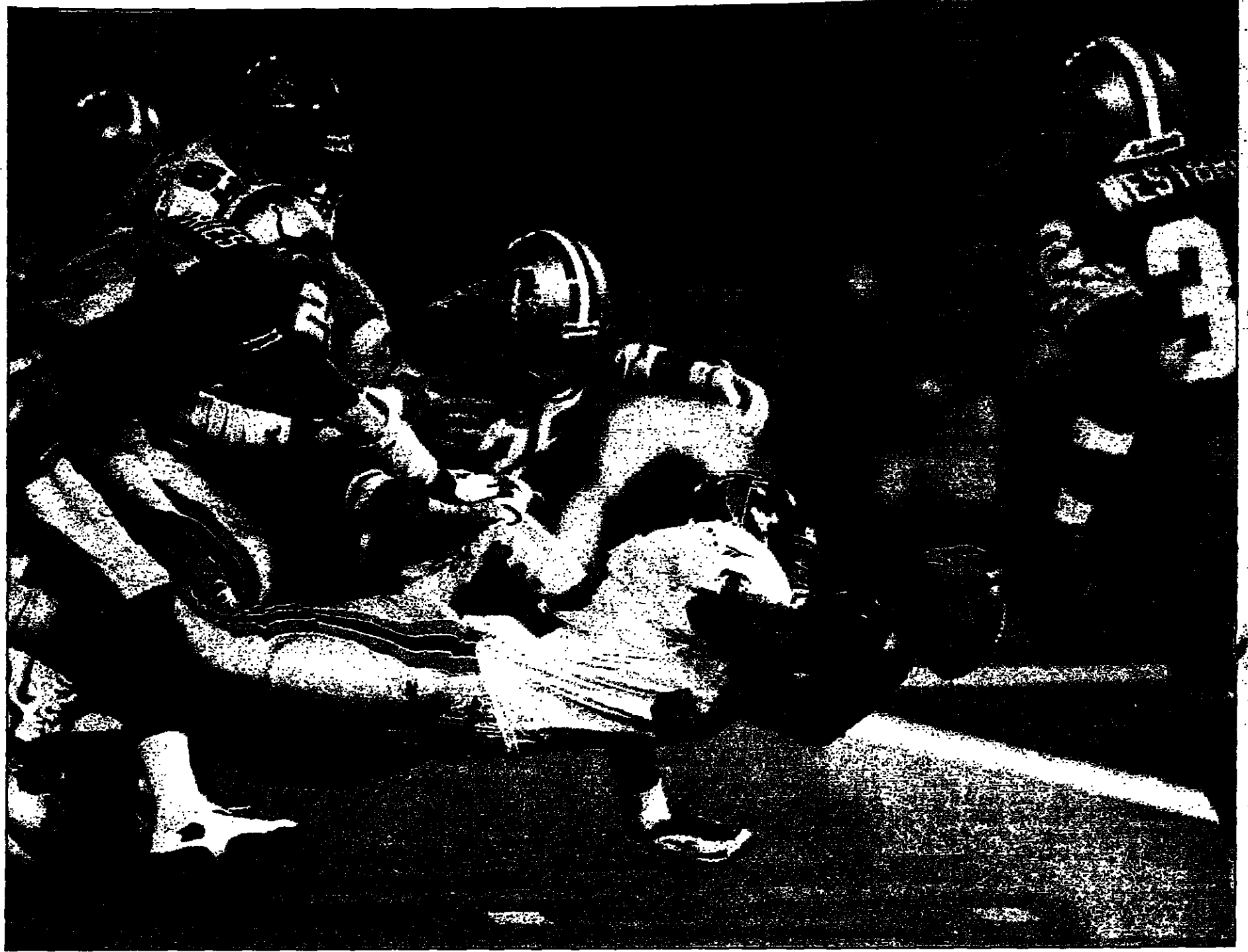
at 17-17 and Anderson scored the winning touchdown on a one-yard run with 6:57 left.

"This right here is the culmination of Dan's hard work," said Anderson. "We won this game for Dan and his family." Reeves underwent heart surgery last Monday and was released from the hospital on Friday. He is expected to be back on the sidelines for the playoffs.

**Vikings 50, Jaguars 10**  
Host Minnesota improved to 14-1 and clinched home-field advantage throughout the playoffs.

Randall Cunningham hooked up with rookie sensation Randy Moss on a flea-flicker for a 43-yard touchdown early in the third quarter, beginning a run of 38 unanswered second-half points by the Vikings.

The 50 points marked Minnesota's highest offensive output in 24 years and took their season total to 530 points, 11 shy of the NFL record set by the 1983



**EXTRA EFFORT** — Falcons RB Jamal Anderson reaches for the end zone at the end of a 26-yard carry against the Lions. The ball was placed at the one-yard line. Anderson scored on the next play, his second TD of the game. Atlanta beat Detroit 24-17.

Washington Redskins.

Cris Carter caught his 100th career touchdown in the fourth quarter, tying him with former Seattle star Steve Largent for second behind Jerry Rice on the NFL all-time list.

With Jacksonville's loss, the New York Jets secured a first-round playoff bye.

**Bengals 25, Steelers 24**  
Doug Pelfrey's fourth field goal — a 21-yarder with 5:12 remaining — gave Cincinnati a stunning away victory.

The Bengals snapped a nine-game losing streak and knocked their arch-rivals Pittsburgh (7-8) out of playoff contention.

Pittsburgh, which erased a 13-point first-half deficit to grab a 24-22 fourth-quarter lead, will miss the playoffs for the first

time in seven years under coach Bill Cowher.

**Cardinals 19, New Orleans 17**  
Chris Jacke kicked a 36-yard field goal as time expired to lift the Cardinals to a home win that kept Arizona in front in the frantic race for the final NFC wild card spot.

Arizona (8-7) can clinch its first playoff berth in 16 years with a win at home against San Diego next week.

Jake Plummer had 32 completions for 394 yards and drove Arizona 73 yards in the final 81

seconds to set up Jacke's 17th career game-winning field goal and second in as many weeks.

With the loss, the Saints (6-9) were eliminated from the playoff picture.

**Cowboys 13, Eagles 9**  
Host Dallas clinched its sixth NFC East title in seven years with an unimpressive victory.

The lone touchdown came on Eric Bjornson's seven-yard run off a fake field goal in the first quarter.

That and two third-quarter Richie Cunningham field goals

was all Dallas needed to beat the woeful 3-12 Eagles.

**Seahawks 27, Colts 3**  
Rickey Walters ran for a career-high 178 yards and a TD as the Seahawks scored the final 17 points in the fourth quarter for a 27-23 win over the Indianapolis Colts.

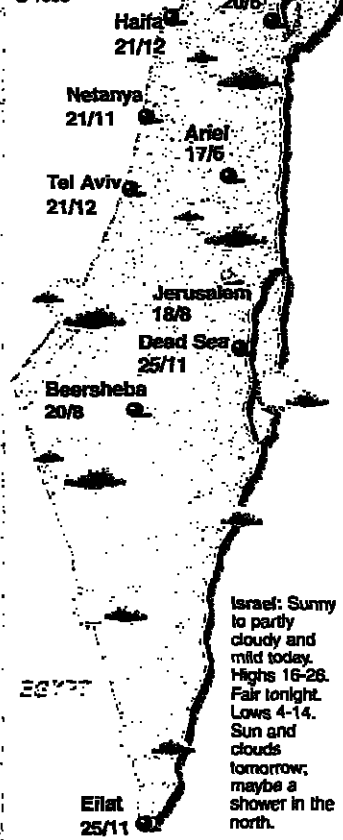
The Colts (3-12) failed to score on four straight plays inside the 10-yard line in the final seconds as Seattle (8-7) kept its extremely slim playoff hopes alive.

See NFL, Page 18

**AIR CANADA**  
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See your travel agent for details.

## THE WEATHER

**ISRAEL**  
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Israel: Sunny to partly cloudy and mild today. Highs 16-26. Fair tonight. Lows 4-14. Sun and clouds tomorrow, maybe a shower in the north.

Effat 25/11 42

Beersheba 20/8

Tel Aviv 21/12

Jerusalem 18/6

Haifa 21/12

Beersheba 20/8

Effat 25/11 42

Beersheba 20/8

Effat 25/11 42

Beersheba 20/8

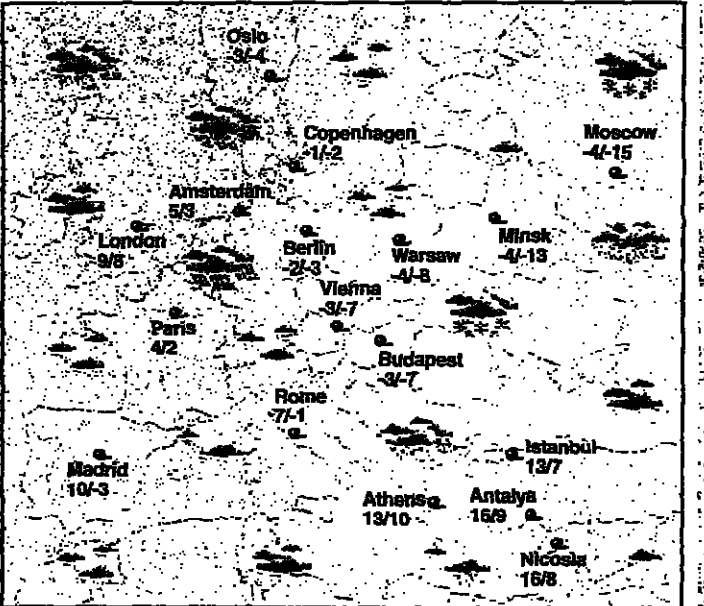
Effat 25/11 42

Beersheba 20/8

Effat 25/11 42

Beersheba 20/8

## EUROPE WEATHER TODAY



Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.

**ISRAEL CITIES**

City	Today	High	Low	Today	High	Low	Today	High	Low	Today	High	Low
Ariel	17/6	17/6	17/6	17/6	17/6	17/6	17/6	17/6	17/6	17/6	17/6	17/6
Beersheba	20/8	20/8	20/8	20/8	20/8	20/8	20/8	20/8	20/8	20/8	20/8	20/8
Dead Sea	25/77	25/77	25/77	25/77	25/77	25/77	25/77	25/77	25/77	25/77	25/77	25/77
Effat	25/77	25/77	25/77	25/77	25/77	25/77	25/77	25/77	25/77	25/77	25/77	25/77
Haifa	21/12	21/12	21/12	21/12	21/12	21/12	21/12	21/12	21/12	21/12	21/12	21/12
Jerusalem	18/6	18/6	18/6	18/6	18/6	18/6	18/6	18/6	18/6	18/6	18/6	18/6
Natanya	21/11	21/11	21/11	21/11	21/11	21/11	21/11	21/11	21/11	21/11	21/11	21/11
Tel Aviv	21/12	21/12	21/12	21/12	21/12	21/12	21/12	21/12	21/12	21/12	21/12	21/12

Israel: Sunny to partly cloudy and mild today. Highs 16-26. Fair tonight. Lows 4-14. Sun and clouds tomorrow, maybe a shower in the north.

Effat 25/11 42

Beersheba 20/8

Tel Aviv 21/12

Jerusalem 18/6

Haifa 21/12

Beersheba 20/8

Effat 25/11 42

Beersheba 20/8

Effat 25/11 42

Beersheba 20/8

Effat 25/11 42

Beersheba 20/8

Effat 25/11 42

Beersheba 20/8

Effat 25/11 42

Beersheba 20/8

Effat 25/11 42

Beersheba 20/8

## NFL PLAYOFF SCENARIOS

**AFC EAST**  
**NEW YORK JETS** — Have clinched AFC East title and a first-round bye.  
**BUFFALO** — Has clinched playoff berth.  
**NEW ENGLAND** — Has clinched playoff berth.  
**MIAMI** — Can clinch playoff berth with one win or a Tennessee loss or tie.  
**AFC CENTRAL**  
**JACKSONVILLE** — Has clinched AFC Central title.  
**TENNESSEE** — Can clinch a playoff berth with a win and two

**AFC WEST**  
**DENVER** — Has clinched AFC West title and home-field advantage throughout the AFC playoffs.  
**GREEN BAY** — Has clinched playoff berth.  
**TAMPA BAY** — Can clinch playoff berth with a win, a N.Y. Giants win and an Arizona loss.

**NFC CENTRAL**  
**MINNESOTA** — Has clinched NFC Central title and home-field advantage throughout the NFC playoffs.  
**ATLANTA** — Has clinched NFC West title and a first-round bye.  
**SAN FRANCISCO** — Has clinched playoff berth.

## Villa three points clear

LONDON (Reuters) — An own goal gave Aston Villa a 1-0 win over Charlton that sent them three points clear of Chelsea at the top of the Premier League last night. Unlucky defender Richard Rufus set up the visitors' victory at the Valley with a third minute deflection that condemned struggling Charlton to a fifth successive defeat.

Charlton Athletic 0, Aston Villa 1 - Richard Rufus 30g Halftime: 0-1 Attendance: 20,043

Premier League	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Aston Villa	16	10	6	2	28	17	36
Chelsea	16	8	9	1	29	17	33
Man United	16	8	7	3	36	23	31
Middlesbrough	16	7	9	3	20	17	29
Leeds	16	7	8	3	20	17	29
Arsenal	16	7	8	3	20	17	29
West Ham	16	6	5	5	23	22	23
Wimbledon	16	7	5	6	23	29	24
Liverpool	16	7	4	7	29	22	25
Newcastle	16	6	6	6	22	21	24
Leicester	16	6	6	6	21	20	24
Sheff Wed	16	5	9	4	18	17	24
Sheff Wed	16	5	9	4	18	17	24
Everton	16	6	4	8	20	29	22
Charlton	16	3	7	8	12	17	17
Coventry	16	4	4	10	15	26	16
Blackburn	16	3	5	10	17	26	14
Southampton	16	3	5	10	15	35	13
Hull City	16	2	6	10	17	32	12

Leading scorers in the English premier league after yesterday's match:  
12 - Dion Dublin (Aston Villa, including 3 for Coventry); 10 - Michael Owen (Liverpool); 9 - Gianfranco Zola (Middlesbrough); 9 - Gianfranco Zola (Chelsea); Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink (Leeds); 8 - Marcus Gayle (Wimbledon); 7 - Ian Wright (West Ham); Dwight Yorke (Manchester Utd); Nicolas Anelka (Arsenal); Gustavo Poyet (Chelsea); 6 - Alan Shearer (Newcastle); Clive Mendonca (Charlton); Robbie Fowler (Liverpool); Duncan Ferguson (Newcastle Utd); 4 for Everton; Jason Euell (Wimbledon); Enrie Heskey (Leicester); Julian Joachim (Aston Villa); Andy Cole (Manchester Utd); Tor Andre Flo (Chelsea); 5 - Tony Cottee (Leicester); Lee Bowyer (Leeds); Noel Whelan (Coventry); Patrick Berger (Liverpool); Ole Gunnar Solskjaer (Manchester Utd); Paul Scholes (Manchester Utd); Egil Ostengard (Southampton); Dennis Bergkamp (Arsenal).

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